

GOVERNMENTALITY: THE NEW URBANISM AND THE CREATIVE CLASS WITHIN
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to unearth how current urban growth machines mobilize governmentality as a political instrument. Specifically, this study examines two features of this mobilizing, the rhetoric of growth machines that speaks to what a space is and means, and the actual outcomes that creates a material, semiotic-infused space. Thus, I investigate both the offering of an elaborate, space-constructing rhetoric and the end product of this rhetorical usage. This spatial production activates governmentality by creating the preconditions necessary for a specific governmentality to operate (i.e. a governable space). As such, the activation of governmentality is the production of a meaning-infused space, both in practice and representation. In this sense, the mobilizing of governmentality is a political strategy that strives to create a socio-spatial milieu in which a specific governmentality can operate. In terms of the theory and literature on urban redevelopment, this research is significant because it addresses a gap in the current understandings of urban growth machines. Conceptualizing space and society as inseparable, and therefore requiring simultaneous management, fits directly into the growth machine thesis. In terms of policy, this research provides insight into the workings of the new urbanism and the creative class as problematic approaches to urban planning and governance. Rather than considering the new urbanism and the creative class as socio-spatial panaceas, I argue in this dissertation that they should rather be understood as the latest political strategy within the unending process of urban redevelopment.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Across the United States today, many urban growth machines draw upon the new urbanism and the creative class to sanction ‘smart growth’.¹ Urban planners, developers, and politicians eagerly adopt these measures to reinforce the notion that metropolitan governances should consist of public authorities subsidizing private entrepreneurial ventures (Harvey 1997; Peck 2005). In this endorsement, proponents employ neoliberal interpretations of political economy, nostalgic renderings of an urban space comprised of inclusive communities, and environmental concerns in order to cast their agenda as promoting responsible city growth. This is accomplished through the mobilization of governmentality by urban growth machines. Governmentality is a socio-spatial project, meaning that the only way to govern society is through the management of space. Governmentality is a process concerned with the regulation of social relations (Inda 2005; Rose 1999). Yet throughout, the mechanism of governmentality operates as a dimly comprehended process. To enhance understanding of this process, I have conducted a study of urban political economy attentive to how urban growth machines activate governmentality.

The process of governmentality involves the managing of human populations in a manner that is indirect, dimly observable, and rooted in colonizing the production of social norms and values. In this sense, governmentality operates through a moral-social economy that regulates human beings. This is accomplished through the construction of idealized citizen subjects, social relations, and the learned behaviors of everyday activity, as well as the unwitting acceptance and

¹ ‘Smart growth’ is a fusion of new urbanist design and federal environmental standards to promote development policy that focused on urban infill and concentrating growth around existing lines of transit (Duany Speck 2010; Florida 2002, 2004).

reproduction of these by human actors. Governmentality sculpts these via infiltrating routinized daily life and the consciousness of beings (Foucault 2007). Governmentality refutes the notion that there is such thing as unfettered human agency. It demonstrates how people unsuspectingly negotiate, often embrace, and typically reproduce a governing agenda, while at the same moment they perceive themselves as behaving in their own self-interest and constituting their own identity. Here, the production of a governing scheme is not a repressive strategy, but is rather a productive one, in which humans become self-regulating and self-making.

This study seeks to unearth how current urban growth machines mobilize governmentality as a political instrument. Specifically, this study examines two features of this mobilizing, the rhetoric of growth machines that speaks to what a space is and means, and the actual outcomes that creates a material, semiotic-infused space. Thus, I investigate both the offering of an elaborate, space-constructing rhetoric and the end product of this rhetorical usage. This spatial production activates governmentality by creating the preconditions necessary for a specific governmentality to operate (i.e. a governable space). In this mobilization, I chronicle, a growth machine advances its redevelopment agenda through the production of proper citizen subjects, social relations, and an everyday *habitus*.²

FINDINGS

In this study, I chronicle that governmentality can only operate through the production of ‘governable spaces’ (Huxley 2006; Rose 1999). As such, the activation of governmentality is the production of a meaning-infused space, both in practice and representation. In this sense, the

² *Habitus* can best be understood as the everyday behaviors and taken for granted knowledge that becomes socialized into individuals within a society (see Bourdieu 1987).

mobilizing of governmentality is a political strategy that strives to create a socio-spatial milieu in which a specific governmentality can operate.

In the course of my analysis, three major narrative themes became readily observable. The first narrative involved the directing of people to embrace an identity for themselves. The space of Atlantic Station, made a central redevelopment project in Atlanta, is elaborately constructed to steer people into sculpting themselves as creative civic residents. Through this constructing, this identity is cast as creative and ambitious entrepreneurs who are socially liberal, environmentally conscious, and have the aesthetic tastes of enlightened urbanites. While this identity is described as progressive and open-minded, materially it is privileged and exclusive.

The second narrative involved the directing of people to embrace an image and understanding of what constitutes the ‘good’ city. The ‘good’ city is presented as an obtainable idyllic urban space in which people behave in civically responsible ways that help to create a globally competitive, glistening city. Through constructing and disseminating an image of the ‘good’ city, the growth machine strives to manage people by discursively normalizing the need to privilege business interests. While such rhetoric sees equity as a result of efficient commercial activity, materially speaking, a governing agenda driven by business interests often results in uneven efficiency and equity (Elkin 1987).

The third and final narrative involved the directing of people to spurn an image and understanding of the ‘bad’ city. When a growth machine directs people to accept the ‘good’ city, it also actively constructs an image of the ‘bad’ city that people are encouraged to spurn. The projected ‘bad’ city, meant to inspire revulsion and contempt, is something to be feared, a threat to be protected from. In contemporary Atlanta, the projected ‘bad’ city is a dreaded, dystopic space, one that will not produce sufficient revenues, jobs, vitality, and livability.

The end product of these three rhetorical themes is the production of an actual material space: Atlantic Station, which becomes infused with symbol and value. Atlantic Station speaks to the meaning of proper urban space as defined by the values and desires of Atlanta's current growth machine. It signifies, most fundamentally, that the proper and needed urban subject today is one who is well educated, affluent, and seeks an exciting urban experience. This identity of a proper urban subject is embedded in the semiotics of Atlantic Station, which speaks to young professionals in its wide-selection of housing units and its strategic location near an exciting new urban scene. The architecture signifies that this is an authentically urban space, but one that is safe and sterile. The inclusion of open spaces solidifies this implication, directing people out onto the streets and sidewalks of Atlantic Station. Yet, this connotation is conditioned by, and in turn conditions, what is meant by urbanism and urban experiences. Atlantic Station may mean urban, but it is a bounded urbanism. While rhetorically and symbolically Atlantic Station presents a façade of offering something for everyone, this space materially reflects a privileged status that reinforces the continued balkanization of Atlanta.

In terms of the theory and literature on urban redevelopment, this research is significant because it addresses a gap in the current understandings of urban growth machines. Conceptualizing space and society as inseparable, and therefore requiring simultaneous management, fits directly into the growth machine thesis. Yet, at this time there is no existing research that explores how this is indicative of the activation of governmentality as an operative process in urban redevelopment. I acknowledge that significant work has been done to critically assess how growth machines both imagine the city and cultivate popular support (see: Cox 1999; Hackworth 2006; Logan and Molotch 1987; Logan, Whaley, and Crowder 1997; Molotch 1976,

1993; Molotch 1999; Short 1999; Wilson 1996). However, no research has examined how the production of meaning infused space by a growth machine serves to activate governmentality.

In terms of policy, this research provides insight into the workings of the new urbanism and the creative class as problematic approaches to urban planning and governance. In mobilizing governmentality through the new urbanism and the creative class, urban growth machines today suggest that creating an ideal built environment will enable governments and developers to positively address all current and potential city problems and dilemmas (Kenny and Zimmerman 2004; Marcuse 2000; Peck 2005). However, this political strategy ignores the class-bias inherent in both the new urbanism and the creative class (Marcuse 2000; Wilson and Keil 2008). Rather than considering the new urbanism and the creative class as socio-spatial panaceas, I argue in this dissertation that they should rather be understood as the latest political strategy within the unending process of urban redevelopment (Davis 1990). One more time, I suggest, the U.S. city is being primed for capital accumulation via the use of an expedient rhetoric, whose attractiveness and resonance optimizes prospects for re-making the ever-evolving form of the city. Presenting the city as a space ripe for re-conquest, through reductionist interpretations of social relations and opaque (and yet discursively constructed as transparent) understandings of land-use, growth machines today work through the new urbanism and the creative class (thereby mobilizing governmentality) through a banal rhetoric of economic viability, environmental responsibility, and social meritocracy, that serves as a guide for city success, in a (perceived) global market guided by the flexible accumulation of capital (Kenny and Zimmerman 2004).

THE RESEARCH FRAME

To conduct my study, I decided to investigate one city's growth machine. The decision to study one city, as opposed to a comparative analysis, was based on the recognition that a single case study would offer a greater depth of analysis for the investigation. I chose Atlanta because Atlanta's growth machine has actively embraced the new urbanism and the creative class. Since early 1998, the Atlanta growth machine has labeled its agenda as 'smart growth', so as to put the contemporary scheme at odds with the 'metastatic' suburban sprawl in the metropolitan region (Rutheiser 1996). This new growth plan is cast as progressive and inclusive while actually reifying exclusionary privilege (Henderson 2004). In taking this position, Atlanta's growth machine is presenting an idealized representation of urban space and society, which needs to be critically interrogated. While issues of hazardous environmental impacts and quality of life have been discursively present in the agenda, the driving motivation for the new growth approach is the same as that which came before, privileging private corporate interests and making an urban form and structure ideal for their economic interests. Thus, through a study of Atlanta's contemporary growth machine, reflected in the prominent redevelopment project of Atlantic Station, I examine how this city's growth machine uses the new urbanism and the creative class, as mobilizations of governmentality, to legitimize their growth agenda and ensure continued urban development.

The decision to study Atlantic Station specifically, as opposed to comparing it with several development projects across Atlanta, is similar to the reasoning behind the selection of a single city's growth machine for analysis. Examining a single redevelopment initiative offers a depth of analysis not available in a comparative study. Therefore, the specificity of a single

development project provides greater analytical detail, which can then be used for a generalized understanding of the larger analytical object of the urban growth machine.

To conduct my analysis, I implemented a mixed methodology for data collection that involved: 1) an archival exploration of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution (AJC)*, 2) a compilation of policy and planning documents related to the Atlantic Station project, 3) and fourteen open-ended interviews with civic and business leaders, developers, architects, and local residents. I also made several visits to the site for observation, and engaged numerous visitors and residents in informal conversation.

After the data had been accumulated and arranged chronologically, the text was then examined, so as to identify common themes indicative of the development of Atlantic Station, and the larger Atlanta growth machine. It was at this time that I made the decision to focus the research on the activation of governmentality. The more I engaged with the data, the more it became clear that a specific political project was at work. A project centered on the human production of space, both rhetorically and materially. I therefore chose to interrogate how Atlanta's current growth machine, through the production of space, has created the preconditions necessary for a specific governmentality to operate.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For purposes of this study, I define the process of political governance as the drive to control and manage social conduct (Inda 2005; Miller and Rose 2008; Rose 1999). I reference the role of government, and its support institutions, as a power bloc that collectively manages human behavior, so as to allow for society to properly function and for a distinctive array of power relations to remain intact (Foucault 2003, 2007, 2008). This is the world of overt human

management – rules, regulations, ordinances, and government stipulations. Unlike governmentality (which involves the managing of human populations that is indirect, dimly observable, and rooted in colonizing the production of social norms and values), this exercise of power is direct and empirically observable. The government apparatus, a central player in the process of governmentality, is identified as the officially elected and appointed individuals who occupy positions of public authority at the city, county, state, and federal levels. Yet, in terms of the actual management of American society, these individuals and institutions typically do not have sufficient rhetorical sway to effectively govern, and must therefore work with private interests to achieve desired results (Elkin 1987; Fainstein and Fainstein 1983). While a recent theme in urban geography has been to examine the neoliberal turn (Hackworth 2006), and how commonplace it has become for government to be an amalgamation of public and private sector actors (Keil 2009), there is a long tradition of private involvement in U.S. urban governance (Elkin 1987; Stone 1989).^{3 4}

Part of this is due to the unique interpretations of political philosophy found within the U.S. (Foucault 2008). Another major reason for this is that the majority of the productive assets in U.S. cities are under private control (Elkin 1987). Therefore, the public sector, the official ‘government’, must find a way to induce the private sector into allowing access to those resources. Complimentary to this, private interests lack sufficient legitimacy to carry out their agenda alone, and must appeal to local authority. It is out of these imperatives that we are given the notion of machines. A machine is a conglomerate of multiple actors representing cross-sector interests (Molotch 1976). It forms out of the composite interests not having sufficient

³ “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political-economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private-property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey 2005, p.2).”

⁴ Atlanta is a prime example of this historical/political legacy (see Stone 1989).

access to resources to realize their own political agenda.⁵ As a result, alliances form with an organized, but not statically unified, agenda.

In recent history, the agenda that often dominates local politics is economic growth in the form of land interests (Hackworth 2006; Logan and Molotch 1987; Logan, Whaley, and Crowder 1997; Molotch 1976, 1993). Therefore, it is helpful to understand that U.S. urban politics is dominated by the formation of growth machines. What this implies, is that public and private actors come together under a common assumption that land development, as a form of commercial interest, will provide needed economic growth. The development of land is invariably concerned with space, and therefore growth machines can be understood in terms of spatial production. Land based elites compete with one another, by representing their spatial interests in specific ways, so as to attract populations who, in theory, will spur capital investment through their use and occupation of space. That is not to say that political struggle will not occur, and that people will blindly accept the imagining of space handed down from the growth machine. Rather, the growth machine mobilizes governmentality, so as to legitimize/rationalize its development agenda, by articulating an ideal socio-spatial imagining of how the city should be spatially organized.

The concept central to this study, governmentality, originates in the work of French theorist Michel Foucault; first outlined in his lectures between 1975-1979, and specifically in the lecture series translated as “Security, Territory, Population” (Foucault 2007). Governmentality takes an object, population, as its focus, political economy as the knowledge through which it operates, and security as its means of operation (Foucault 2007; Jessop 2007). In this sense, governmentality operates through a moral-social economy that regulates human beings. The

⁵ For a theory of access see Ribot and Peluso 2003.

purpose of governmentality is to counter perceived threats to a social order, and in doing so legitimize and rationalize the governing objective. However, government does not simply impose this scheme upon the populace, but accounts for and utilizes human action in the process (Rose 1999).

Governmentality is a process through which an idealized subject, social relations, and everyday *habitus* are constructed. In addition, there is an ongoing mediation of the meanings and values implanted in these elements, through which there is often an unwitting acceptance and reproduction of these by human actors. Governmentality refutes the notion that there is such thing as unfettered human agency. It demonstrates how people unsuspectingly negotiate, often embrace, and typically reproduce a governing agenda, while at the same moment they perceive themselves as behaving in their own self-interest and constituting their own identity (Luke 1999). Here, the production of a governing scheme is not a repressive strategy, but is rather a productive one, in which humans become self-regulating and self-making.

Another key concept in this study, the new urbanism, is a widely accepted planning vision. At its center, it promotes the creation and restoration of diverse, walkable, compact, and vibrant mixed-use communities. Often these spaces are comprised of the same components as conventional developments, but they are supposed to be assembled in a more integrated fashion, in the form of complete communities (<http://www.newurbanism.org/>). This development vision rejects, and responds to, a sense of fragmentation in cities and in the broader world, and strives to create more holistic, organic landscapes (Harvey 1997). Its popularity and resonance flows out of this point, which makes this vision immensely popular in cities and communities across America.

Yet, there has also been criticism of the new urbanism; in particular the sense among some that it is a class biased form of redevelopment (Harvey 1997; Marcuse 2000). Here, this vision is purportedly middle- and upper-middle class oriented and serving. I add to these criticisms the notion that while the new urbanism purports to build inclusive spaces, it is inherently based on normative assumptions of behavior and identity. The new urbanism invokes a nostalgic sense of community that never truly existed in an urban setting (Harvey 1997; Marcuse 2000). The idealized space of the new urbanism is suburban small-town America, a space fairly homogenous by race, income, and family disposition (Marcuse 2000). By presenting an idyllic, yet mythical, image of space, and its appropriate usage and occupation, the new urbanism ignores that this space is (intentionally) inaccessible to specific unprivileged sections of society (Harvey 1997). Nevertheless, by placing an emphasis on inclusive communities, the new urbanism discursively constructs an impression of diversity and tolerance. Yet:

“Well-founded communities often exclude, define themselves against others, erect all sorts of keep-out signs (if not tangible walls), internalize surveillance, social controls, and repression... Community has often been a barrier to, rather than facilitator of, social change.” (Harvey 1997, p.3).

In the final analysis, the theoretical underpinnings of the new urbanism are paradoxical and contradictory. The community envisioned by new urbanists is one of exclusion based upon affluent privilege, while being rhetorically cast as the opposite. Tied directly into this is the ideological keystone of the new urbanism, that managing the built environment “...is the key to solving numerous problems confronting government today...” (Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, in Marcuse, 2000, p.5). This statement, issued by one of the original signatories to the Congress of the New Urbanism, offers the position that by managing the built environment, one will be able to manage human populations. This ‘spatial determinism’ embraces a neoliberal political economy to fashion a sensibility that good spaces will produce good people (Harvey 1997). This

suggests that by controlling development, planners and developers can control people, which indicates the deployment of something at the heart of this study: governmentality.

By the year 2000, the new urbanism had become one of the most widely employed discursive tools in US urban planning (Marcuse 2000), and would go on to heavily influence other planning visions such as the creative class (Florida 2002). The creative class is a demographic category coined by Richard Florida, which references a social group of new knowledge workers. Florida identifies this population as emerging in the late-1990s. Now fused with an urban redevelopment vision in many U.S. cities, this demographic category is identified as the key to restructuring cities. By building cities to nurture and nourish these creative people, it is contended, cities will be saved from their failing economic states. Thus, the assumption of this redevelopment vision is that these new knowledge workers are the key to forging globally competitive cities amid stern, uncompromising new global times. Consequently, the goal of a city now should be to redevelop urban space and create a city spatial organization that lures and retains these needed economic beings.

Florida's thesis draws upon Schumpeterian economics to argue that entrepreneurial innovation is paramount for economic success (Florida 2002; Peck 2005).⁶ The hypothesis is that creative people will constantly innovate. Constant innovation is required, because any competitive edge leading to profit is ephemeral (Polanyi 1944; Schumpeter 1962). The creative class proposes an escape to this trap. The key is the creative capacity of these human beings, which, according to the creative class thesis, is limitless (Florida 2002). Yet, what is ignored here is that while human creative capacity might be limitless, for every winner there is a reciprocal loser and uneven development follows (Mah 2010; Wilson 2007). Nonetheless, the

⁶ Schumpeter is often selectively read as promoting constant creative-destruction through entrepreneurial activity. However, Schumpeter argues that this cycle will eventually lead to such gross inequity that an outside force, usually official government authority, will have to step in (see Schumpeter 1962).

creative class vision presents a rationality that this will not occur; creativity is cast as something that will always adapt and thrive in economic hardship (Florida 2010).

The production of space, a final important concept in this study, is defined as the outcome of a human seizure and integration of the ‘primordial essence’ of space into the social-political-economic arrangements of a society (Lefebvre 1991). In this seizure and integration, a physical form emerges that is intimately structuring of, and structured by, existing social and economic relations. Rhetorically, space is typically presented and understood as easy to read and easy to understand. Through this rhetoric, space becomes something passive, a simple catchment for things. Yet, borrowing from Lefebvre (1991), space is in reality complex and opaque. Space cannot be easily read, because it is the medium through which human beings experience and live out their everyday lives.

Since governmentality is concerned with the regulation of social relations in and through space, I classify governmentality as a socio-spatial project. This means that social relations are intrinsically linked to spatial relations (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1980). Moreover, scholars have pointed out that governmentality can only operate through the production of ‘governable spaces’ (Huxley 2006; Rose 1999). The only way to govern society is through the production of space. The human condition requires social interaction, and these social interactions operate within and create space. Consequently, managing society implies the simultaneous management of space. From this, we can understand the activation of governmentality as the production of meaning-infused space.

This conceptualizing of space fits directly into the growth machine thesis, whose central question is “for whom is space produced, and why” (Molotch 1999). Additionally, the new urbanism and the creative class today readily serve as strategies for deploying governmentality.

Proponents of both assert that the management of the built environment can translate into predetermined, and therefore profitable, behavior. As a result, we need to understand that a growth machine that adopts and deploys the new urbanism and the creative class invariably relies on these planning measures to produce governable spaces. What a growth machine seeks, and what the new urbanism and the creative class provide, is a way to indirectly steer human actors to willingly, but unwittingly, embrace a governing agenda based on land development.

This is a very brief synopsis of growth machines, governmentality, the new urbanism, the creative class, and the production of space, but it serves to lay a framework for this study. In the interest of full clarification, the next chapter will be dedicated to a more in depth engagement with urban governance, growth politics, the formation of urban growth machines, and the mobilization of governmentality. For now, let us understand that the focus of this study is Atlanta's contemporary growth machine, reflected in the Atlantic Station project. In this context, the aim of this study is to deepen our understanding of how contemporary growth machines operate. This is accomplished by revealing the specifics of how they toil to activate governmentality as a political strategy.

EMPIRICAL FIELD SITE

In the decades between 1980 and 2000, Metropolitan Atlanta (see Figure 1) was one of the fastest growing urban centers in the United States (Bullard et al. 2000; Henderson 2004; Leary 1998; Rutheiser 1996). However, almost all of this growth was seen outside of the city proper, which had been experiencing a population decline since the 1970s. In large part, this was due to the growth machine in Atlanta privileging private investment through land development, and rationalizing this policy through the trickle-down theory of Reaganomics (Allen 1996;

Rutheiser 1996). As a result, the growth machine steered development to favored white enclaves of the city, such as Buckhead and Midtown, as well as to the northern suburban areas, which were predominantly white and middle class, while further marginalizing the predominantly black urban poor (Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989).



Figure 1: Metropolitan Atlanta 2011, provided by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)

Many attempts were made to revitalize the downtown, but were rarely successful beyond the construction of highly insulated private complexes (Rutheiser 1996). Continuous emphasis on highway construction exacerbated the rapid suburban sprawl (Henderson 2004, 2006; Kruse 2005), and an unofficial, but clearly recognized, division of Atlanta emerged: a white northern

in-town and metropolitan region, and a concentration of African Americans in the downtown and the south side (Bullard et al. 2000; Bullard et al. 2001; Keating 2001; Sjoquist 2000).⁷

Over reliance on road construction, for the economic growth of Metropolitan Atlanta, eventually led to the region having some of the worst traffic difficulties in the country (Henderson 2004; Leary 1998). Atlanta began to be viewed by other U.S. urban areas as a negative model for growth (Bullard et al. 2000), and in January 1998 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) placed a freeze on federal funding of transportation construction in Metropolitan Atlanta (Henderson 2004).⁸ Realizing the previous growth strategy had led to a crisis of accumulation, Atlanta's contemporary growth machine responded by recasting several urban centers across the metropolitan region as environmentally friendly cosmopolitan nodes, offering 'livability', community values, and diversity. Drawing upon the ideological framework of the new urbanism and the creative class, Atlanta's growth machine characterized these sites as representations of 'smart growth'. Some viewed this new agenda as a type of comprehensive approach to regional planning, something that had been sought by several activists and scholars for years (Bullard et al. 2000).

The most prominent project featured in the newly restored Atlanta growth machine is Atlantic Station. Atlantic Station is a massive new urbanist development, situated on the former site of the Atlantic Steel Mill in Midtown Atlanta. The project sits on a 138-acre stretch of land, directly adjacent to the United States Interstate Highway I75-I85 inter-change (known colloquially as the Downtown Connector), which runs through (and divides) central Atlanta (see Figure 2). When all phases of the development are complete, Atlantic Station will be able to

⁷ For an examination of race relations and geography in Atlanta beyond just white and African American, see Rutheiser 1996.

⁸ This was the first time in the 43-year history of the Federal Clean Air Act that such sanctions were placed on a metropolitan area (Henderson 2004).

host over 15 million square feet of retail, residential, and office space, and will have cost upwards of \$2 billion (Hankins and Powers 2009).⁹



Figure 2: Aerial photograph of Atlantic Station, copyright Atlantic Station LLC, used with permission.

⁹ Currently it is less than half built-out.

The project is divided into three sectors: 'The District', 'The Commons' and 'The Village', each of which represents certain aspects of the site's design (see Figure 3). 'The District' is the retail/entertainment sector, and has the distinction of being the most heavily frequented and well-known portion of the development (Irving 2009). 'The Commons' is a residential space, centered on a combination central park and pond, with a massive triumphal gate of classical architecture framing its entrance. 'The Village' is a combination of loft housing, tech business space, and retail facilities. Currently advertised as having 5,000 available home units, ranging from apartments, condominiums, lofts, town houses, and detached housing, Atlantic Station is presented as the ideal space for urban Atlanta living. The project has received local, regional, and national attention and planning awards (Frankston 2004; Pendered 2004b), as well as being used as a 'model for growth' in US cities (Pendered 2007).

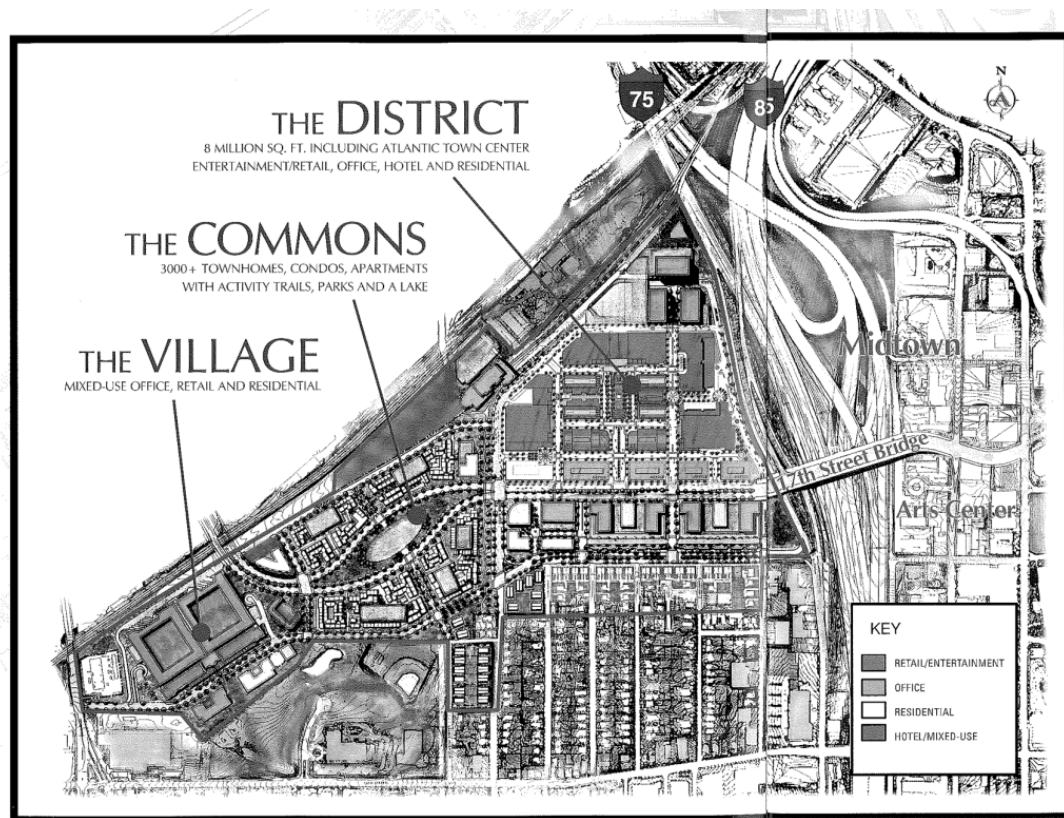


Figure 3: Site Plan, copyright Atlantic Station LLC, used with permission.

Opened in 1901, the Atlantic Steel Mill was in operation until 1998, although it had been only sporadically used since 1979. The site saw rapid decline in the latter half of the 1970s, as industrialism in the United States began to flag (Torpy 1996a, b). The property was put on the market in 1973, but it was not until 1997, when Jacoby Development Inc (JDI) put together a plan to buy the land, that any real attempt was made at redeveloping the site. In large part this was caused by the incredibly high cost of cleaning up waste byproducts from the steel production (Wilbert 1999a, b). There was interest in the property prior to JDI, but because of the \$100 million asking price few developers could rationalize the cost of cleanup and land-purchase. Through an arrangement with Atlantic Steel, and the Georgia Environmental Planning Division (EPD) of the EPA, JDI contracted to acquire the property for \$76 million and Atlantic Steel would pay for the cost of cleanup (Salter 1997b).¹⁰ Total cleanup lasted until 2001.

At the time of the land deal, JDI had never developed property within Atlanta. Fortuitously, a local real estate developer, Charles R. Brown, who had several high profile projects in and around the city, approached JDI executives. Brown, an alumnus of Georgia Tech University, was representing the Georgia Tech Foundation, and wished to purchase some of the land from JDI. Instead, JDI hired Brown and his real estate company, CBR Realty, to streamline the redevelopment process through their connections to the local political scene (Salter 1998c). In addition, Brown's connections at Georgia Tech put JDI in touch with Brian Leary, a graduate student in urban planning at Georgia Tech, whom JDI hired to spearhead the design.¹¹

Working closely with the City of Atlanta, and the local neighborhood-planning unit (NPU-E), the new JDI/CBR Realty alliance was able to get the land rezoned by the end of 1998.

¹⁰ This agreement was possible largely thanks to the loosening of EPA regulations under the Clinton Administration, which were designed to stimulate redevelopment of choice real-estate (see Leary 1998; Salter 1997b).

¹¹ Leary's Masters thesis serves as the original formulation for Atlantic Station (see Leary 1998).

However, City Hall placed a stipulation on rezoning, which stated that no construction permits would be issued for the project until a bridge across the Downtown Connector had been constructed at 17th Street (Salter 1998b). Without the bridge, access to the site would be highly limited, and would require the use of narrow surface streets. Building the bridge would tie the project into the Downtown Connector, providing highway access, as well as connecting Atlantic Station to the major Atlanta thoroughfare of Peachtree Road. In addition, construction of the 17th St. Bridge was seen as an opportunity to open up the west side of town to development and gentrification (Campell 2002; Hairston 2007; Labovitz 2004; Salter 1998b).¹²

However, the 17th Street Bridge could not be built because it would have to cross federal highways. The January 1998 hold on federal transit funding to Metropolitan Atlanta by the EPA blocked any transportation construction within (or over) federal jurisdiction. Prompted by the situation, Deputy Administrator of EPA Region 4 in Atlanta, Stan Meiburg, contacted JDI concerning the results of a study one of his researchers had conducted. The study demonstrated that urban infill development would help to reduce negative air quality impacts in Atlanta (Leary 2006).¹³ As a result, JDI appealed, successfully, to the EPA to label the project a transportation control model (TCM). The hope was that by gaining TCM status, the EPA would place the redevelopment under the Project eXcellence and Leadership (XL) banner. Project XL was a Clinton-era program, established to help local governments and businesses develop innovative strategies to test more cost-effective ways to limit environmental impacts (Environmental Protection Agency 2000a, b, c). After several models and analyses were run, in 1999 the project

¹² The Downtown Connector divided central Atlanta with its construction in the 1950s, and expansion in the 1980s, and resulted in several decades of disinvestment on the west side of in-town Atlanta.

¹³ What the research demonstrated was that infill development would result in fewer emissions than a similar development in the suburbs.

became the first (and only) commercial redevelopment accepted under the Project XL umbrella (Leary 2006).

Nearing the end of 1999, JDI and the City of Atlanta began to discuss options for financing the redevelopment. Eventually, the notion of creating a Tax Allocation District (TAD) was put forth. To encourage public approval, CRB Realty, under contract with JDI, hired Economic Research Associates to analyze the benefits of the proposed redevelopment. The plan was to demonstrate to City Hall how the project would result in significant increases in revenue streams for private investors, and by extension Atlanta at large (Associates 1999). The Atlanta City Council quickly approved the TAD (Johnson 1999). The Fulton County Board of Commissioners also voted in favor of the TAD, citing it as a necessary tool to attract developers and growth into Atlanta (Charles 1999). The TAD agreement froze property tax revenues at their then current rate for a term of 25 years. Any additional revenues generated by increased property values would be put into a trust, and used to pay off the sale of bonds the City and County would issue to finance updating the infrastructure of the site (Hankins and Powers 2009).

At the same time XL status was being bestowed, and TAD approval was secured, JDI formed a partnership with AIG Global Real Estate (AIG GRE) to further finance the project. Even with the TAD, JDI lacked the resources to redevelop the site. Neill Faucett, the accounting and financial consultant for JDI, met with his personal friend Kevin Fitzpatrick, President and CEO of AIG GRE at the time, for advice on finding a financial backer (Leary 2003 (unpublished)). Fitzpatrick consulted his firm, and it was decided that it would make more sense financially for AIG GRE to back the project (Leary 2006). JDI and AIG GRE formed the joint venture, Atlantic Station LLC, on December 12, 1999 (although it was not fully official until closing on December 31, 1999), with CBR Realty retained as consultants.

By 2001, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GADOT) had approved a design for the 17th Street Bridge, the EPD of Georgia had granted that remediation of the site had been sufficient, and City Hall had approved \$75 million in TAD bonds to be issued, so as to pay for initial construction costs. The next two years would see several developers sign on (and sometimes back out), portions of the overall project built, the 17th Street Bridge construction completed, and the first residents move in. From there, it would be another two years until the ‘grand opening’ of the project in October 2005, when the retail portion of the project was completed (Hughes 2005a, b, c).

Until the Great Recession of 2007-2008 (and arguably still going on) the project was seen as successful. While original expectations were for the residential aspects to do quite well (most units sold out prior to construction), tardiness in production and the U.S. housing crash caused many investors to walk away, preferring to accept a \$1000 deposit loss as opposed to paying for a devalued piece of property (Duffy 2009a, b). Additionally, the economic downturn caused a loss of retail and restaurant profits. In interviews, some people also identified the crackdown on nightlife in the Buckhead area (see Hankins et al. 2012) as opening up Atlantic Station to ‘bad elements’ (Interview with JDI executive).

While Atlantic Station might have yet to deliver on all of its promise, expectations for the project still run high, especially after the December 31, 2010 sale of majority ownership to a joint venture of CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) and North American Properties Inc. (NAP). AIG was forced to sell off assets to repay its 2008 \$85 billion federal loan, and the company’s investment in Atlantic Station was one such asset. The total value of the sale to CBRE/NAP was \$168.5 million (the specific land parcel prices were between 25-50% lower than the max property value of 2007) (Sams 2011a). Since taking over, the new owners have heavily emphasized the

necessity for Atlantic Station to be remodeled, so as to better attract the creative class and live up to its new urbanist vision (Sams 2011b; Southerland 2011a).

Over the last 14 years, Atlantic Station has changed from a nominally operated steel mill into a national model for brownfield redevelopment and ‘sustainable mixed-use communities’ (Southerland 2011b, c). In this context, Atlantic Station was the first concerted effort on the part of Atlanta’s growth machine to deploy the language and tools of the new urbanism and the creative class (Shaw 2009). Moreover, the size of the project, 138-acres, makes it the largest such endeavor in Atlanta to date (Hankins and Powers 2009). While other Atlanta developments, such as Glenwood Park, were done as small-scale enclaves (Wall 2005), the location and size of Atlantic Station were used to present the project as the answer to Atlanta’s suburban sprawl and in-town disinvestment (Leary 1998). The ability to get Atlantic Station planned and built required the coordination of cross-sector, and cross-scalar, support. All in all, \$2 billion was secured and invested, with several hundred million coming from public subsidies (Hankins and Powers 2009).¹⁴ Support from public authorities came from the federal government, in the form of the EPA (Seabrook 2001), all the way down to the local level (Crenshaw 1998). City, county, and state authority provided key support (Staff 2000). Former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes took a vested interest in the project, and directed the Georgia Regional Transit Authority (GRTA) to ensure Atlantic Station came to fruition (Hairston 2002).¹⁵ Former City of Atlanta Mayors Bill Campbell and Shirley Franklin actively promoted the project’s funding and construction (Salter 1998a; Stafford 2005a, b; Turner 1998). Private capital in the form of local real estate, all the way up to global finance, worked in unison to sell Atlantic Station as a utopian answer for sustained growth and socio-economic equity (Leary

¹⁴ The majority of the investment came from private capital.

¹⁵ Some argue that GRTA was created intentionally to fast track the Atlantic Station project (see Kahn 2003).

2006). Such a wide array of actors and institutions helps to emphasize just how significant Atlantic Station has been for the contemporary Atlanta growth machine. As the definitive contemporary offering by the Atlanta growth machine, Atlantic Station stands as the quintessential model for investigating how the new urbanism and the creative class in Atlanta became infused into the contemporary ‘smart growth’ agenda.

GOVERNMENTALITY IN ATLANTIC STATION

I do not just assume that governmentality is operating within Atlantic Station. I made several visits to the site for observation, and in doing so it became readily apparent that Atlantic Station and its occupants exhibit the pervasive influence of governmentality. Within the confines of Atlantic Station, commonplace social interactions signify a sense of proper, and responsible, civic behavior. Through the everyday mannerisms and activities of users of the space, people perform and embody identities and belief systems. This engagement with Atlantic Station serves as a socializing medium through which individual performance and activity indicates a construction of subjectivity (Lefebvre 1991). Moreover, these seemingly banal actions and interactions are embodiments and displays of power. People are not simply rendering themselves as subjects; they are reproducing norms of civic identity, social relations, and an everyday *habitus*.

Governmentality is embedded everywhere in Atlantic Station. This is observable in the ways people actively engage with both each other and the space of Atlantic Station. In moving through the space, reading the space, and being read in the space, the process of governmentality is at work. People are active participants of governmentality when they visit ‘The District’ and go shopping, when they go to work in Atlantic Station’s office towers, when they go to IKEA to

buy home furnishings. People are embodying governmentality when they live in Atlantic Station, walk along its sidewalks, and utilize its open spaces. What I am describing may seem innocuous, but governmentality tells us that it is not. The people moving in and out of the LA Fitness gymnasium in Atlantic Station sculpt more than their muscles; they are signifying identity. The same goes for the daily group of joggers in the central park, and the throngs of people who eat in the site's restaurants. Not to be left out, the hordes of people who shop in the many different clothing stores routinely 'wear' their privileged class and racial status, confidently communicating who they are and what their norms and expectations are.

The governmentality observable in Atlantic Station is one of enlightened urbanism. Here, there is a conflation of luxury consumption in a sterilized environment with authentic urban living. Living, working, and playing in Atlantic Station occurs in a bounded space, physically and metaphorically, that allows for human subjects to perceive of themselves as environmentally responsible, socially inclusive, and politically progressive. Through daily routines and engagements, individuals within Atlantic Station construct an identity of themselves as liberal urbanites sheltered from the disorder and confusion of other urban spaces. Confidently striding across their spaces, sternly observing their surroundings in a surveillance-like posture, dressing in elaborately neat, fashionable clothes, a physical embodiment simultaneously communicates who they are to themselves, who they are to others, and what their normative civic values are to all. In this process of value internalizing and 'bodying' its content, these people ultimately reinforce the designs of the contemporary growth machine. Rather than operating as unguided agents, then, these individuals are being conditioned as political subjects. Their individual activities and interactions demonstrate how they have been habituated through the space of Atlantic Station to conflate progressive urbanism with affluent privilege. As a

result, they reproduce the ideological foundations upon which the contemporary ‘smart growth’ agenda rests.

While this process is fascinating in itself, I am interested in how the contemporary Atlanta growth machine activates this governmentality as a political strategy. In promoting ‘smart growth’, the Atlanta growth machine turns to sites, like Atlantic Station, to cultivate support for a growth agenda infused with the new urbanism and the creative class. While members of the growth machine never use the term governmentality, the rhetoric of ‘smart growth’ and its material outcome, Atlantic Station as a semiotic space, is readily interpretable as a mobilization of this process. In offering a meaning infused space, the Atlanta growth machine creates the socio-physical landscape necessary for this governmentality to take hold and operate.

CHAPTER 2 - GROWTH MACHINES AND GOVERNMENTALITY

URBAN GOVERNANCE

Most of the research in urban geography focusing on political economy and municipal governance has drawn on one, or a combination therein, of three major theoretical perspectives: regulation theory, urban regime theory, and urban growth machine theory. None of these analyses is limited solely to the discipline of geography, and each offers a dynamic approach by which to understand how urban space and society are governed. Growth machine theory is a fusion of Marxism and hermeneutics which theorizes U.S. urban political economy as fundamentally tied to a practice of using and exchanging land parcels in the pursuit of economic growth (Logan and Molotch 1987; Molotch 1976). The regulation school takes a neo-Marxist approach, rooted in structuralism, that seeks to examine the ways in which urban governance serves as a means of regulating social relations to support capital accumulation (Aglietta 2001; Boyer 1990). Urban regime theory asserts that within the U.S. city, there is a division of labor between formal public authority and private enterprise (one drives to accumulate, the other strives to regulate) that necessitates an interrogation of political negotiation and coalition formation (Elkin 1987; Stone 1989).

For the purposes of this research, growth machine theory provides the most productive analytical model. In my point, the growth machine thesis tries to steer a middle course between the macroeconomic structuralism of regulation theory and the overt emphasis on localism presented by urban regime theory (Jonas and Wilson 1999). Beginning with the theoretical assertion that urban political economy within the U.S. is to be understood through the use and exchange of land-parcels (Molotch 1976), the growth machine thesis examines how, and for whom, space is produced in an attempt to manage society in the pursuit of capital accumulation (Molotch 1999). Yet, to fully appreciate how these spaces are produced, we must also be aware

of how governance in the U.S. city is the result of coalition formations that seek to regulate social relations in the pursuit of economic development. Hence, I do not disregard the insights offered by the regulation approach and urban regime theory, and see their strengths being incorporated into growth machine analysis (Lauria 1999).

REGULATION THEORY

It is important to recognize that while regulation theory has gained substantial standing among urban scholars, this concept is more of a research program than a fully developed theory (Aglietta 2001). While there is no singular school of regulation theory, the work done in the field has focused on the way capitalist economies become stabilized through the regulation of social relations, within a mode of production, so as to ensure continued capital accumulation (Boyer 2002). The regulation approach addresses how and why economic crises in capitalism emerge, and the resulting transformation in social relations. This theory thus provides an analytical model for the examination of how economic and social dynamics vary across space and time as capitalist economies struggle to manage and direct the spatial organization of cities and their social relations (Boyer 1990).

Regulation theory is steeped in Marxist analysis and a refutation of neoclassical economic theory. Central to its assumptions is the Marxian notion that contradictory tendencies and logics exist within a capitalist system and its system of economic micro-places. Regulationists do not disregard the necessity within capitalism to unevenly develop, but instead accept this disparity as inevitable and societally problematic. Yet, by examining the ways in which capital accumulation is linked to socio-economic normalization and historical contingencies, regulation scholars seek to escape the historical determinism of traditional

Marxist inquiry (Boyer 1990). Therefore, the regulation approach can be understood as a neo-Marxian structural analysis interested in the ways capitalism has managed to negotiate new circumstances and to survive across space and time (Aglietta 2001; Boyer 1990).

Regulation scholars argue that through the reproduction and normalization of social relations, which enable modes of production to emerge, capitalist societies are able to adapt to crises and develop new methods for accumulating capital (Aglietta 2001). Therefore, the regulation approach attempts to connect an investigation of political economy with that of civil society and the government apparatus (Jessop 1997). This necessitates cross-disciplinary analysis to try and understand the spatial-temporal contexts within which economic crises emerge and are responded to by the transformation of social relations (Boyer 1990). Staying true to its Marxist origins, a regulation analysis acknowledges the accumulation imperative within capitalism, but does so in a manner that recognizes every society will use distinct methods for pursuing capital accumulation (Feldman 1997; Low 1994). Therefore, instead of simply accepting economic determinism, regulation scholars seek to investigate how a society becomes managed and arranged through formal and informal methods. This management is understood as “regulation.”

It follows that regulation does not mean direct and overt force, but rather the regularization of social activity to enable capital accumulation to operate without interruption and with minimal disruption (Jessop 1990). The process of regulating social activity becomes understood as a mode of regulation. For regulation scholars, modes of regulation are the central analytical tool, arguing that examining the ways in which civil society, the government apparatus, and political economy interact, one becomes able to understand how growth is pursued. To regulationists, growth is mandatory within capitalism. Yet, accumulation is not an

uninterrupted and linear process, rather it is marked by continuous crises and new means for capital accumulation must be developed (Aglietta 2001; Boyer 1990).

In the regulation approach, systems for capital accumulation are termed regimes of accumulation. In this sense, a regime is the interaction between the government apparatus and capital to ensure continued economic growth (Jessop 1997). The regime of accumulation must have corresponding modes of regulation to stably function. As such, the regulation approach tries to understand this connection between modes of regulation and regimes of accumulation. What this means for an analysis of urban governance, is that a regulation approach helps to demonstrate how the local, regional, national, and global scales are all interconnected (McGuirk 2000, 2004).

Instead of privileging one scale to another, the regulation approach provides totality. It enables the examination of modes of regulation, as an operative of urban governance, working within an overarching regime of accumulation. However, this is also the greatest drawback to implementing the regulation perspective for an understanding of urban governance. While regulation theory provides macroeconomic understanding, which can help to abstract and situate the local experience, it is too broad to capture the complexity and detail of the local experience. Such a general approach thus imposes a reductionism on the complexity of the local, eradicating detail and specificity (Feldman 1997; Low 1994). It follows that a regulation approach, for the purposes of this study, would be problematic. It would assist in the comprehension of how urban governance in the U.S. comes to regulate social relations through the production of space. However, the analytical focus would be on a regime of flexible accumulation and not on the localized production, occupation, and use of space to regulate human activity. Regulatory techniques are a conceptual tool for regulation theorists, meant to help with an investigation of

capital accumulation (Goodwin and Painter 1997). As a result, the regulation approach would impose an ambiguity in attempts to understand the specifics of relations and rhetorical practices of urban governances and other localized institutions and power formations (Goodwin and Painter 1997).

URBAN REGIME THEORY

Urban regime theory has become an important conceptual tool in the study of U.S. urban policy and politics. Originating as a way to understand the relationships between public and private actors in U.S. cities, the concept has been used to try and examine a myriad of urban geographic scales, from the metropolitan region down to the neighborhood (Dowding 2001; Mossberger and Stoker 2001). Additionally, some scholars have attempted to use urban regime theory to try and understand how once marginalized populations come to be incorporated into governing coalitions; probably the best example of this is the work of Clarence Stone on Atlanta (Stone 1989).

Urban regime theory is useful for understanding how politics and policy play out at the urban level within U.S. cities. Yet, it lacks the ability to situate this localized context into a broader understanding of social relations and modes of production (Lauria 1997). Additionally, because urban regime theory is primarily observational, it has rarely made substantive commentary on relations of power (Molotch 1999). As a result, urban regime theory provides us with an analytical model that is unerringly useful in understanding governance at the local scale, but which fails to provide for higher-level abstraction (Lauria 1997).

From a practical standpoint, urban regime theory investigates the long history of civic boosterism in the U.S., and how that tradition needs to be understood as part of the governance

process in the U.S. city (Elkin 1987). What is meant by an urban regime, is the informal arrangements that enable and constrain actual governmental authority within an urban area (Stone 1989). While government is colloquially understood in the United States as official public authority, the majority of productive assets are privately owned (Elkin 1987; Fainstein and Fainstein 1983). Additionally, public authority in the U.S. is severely limited (Stone 1989). As a result, government, especially in the U.S. urban context, needs to be understood in terms of regime formation. Moreover, what urban regime theory offers is the means for understanding the limits and constraints of political actors within the U.S. city. While it is the case that official public authority is restricted due to the majority of productive resources being privately owned, private owners do not have the authority, or legitimacy, to legalize land use or raise public revenues. Therefore, urban regime theory allows the investigation of each U.S. city individually, and unearths the ways in which private and public officials negotiate in the pursuit of a shared governing agenda.

Urban regime theory asserts two fundamental points for understanding urban governance. First, most productive resources in the U.S. are privately owned. Therefore cities in the United States are predominantly reliant upon property taxes to maintain economic viability (Fainstein and Fainstein 1983). The objective of public actors is to find ways to improve existing, and create new, property assets to stabilize current investment and attract new revenue. Connected to this, is a capitalist logic that asserts private control of production as optimal. Because of this, the civic population is heavily dependent on private investment and employment. Thus, public authorities must enable private accumulation because of the citizenry's reliance upon the private sector for continued material interest. Hence, what is seen as good for business becomes interpolated as good for the city. According to Elkin (1987), this leads to a further assumption

that enabling business interests will lead to increased efficiency in service provision.

Empirically this is not accurate, as the sacrifice of equity for efficiency leads to a municipal loss on both fronts (Elkin 1987). Nevertheless, there is a preemptive power observable within urban regime formation that allows for business interests to find advantageous positioning.

The second fundamental point made by urban regime theory, is that local authority is severely restricted in the United States (Stone 1989):

“All government authority in the United States is greatly limited – limited by the Constitution, limited perhaps even more by the nation’s political tradition, and limited structurally by the autonomy of privately owned business enterprise,”
(*ibid*, p.3).

Local authority becomes even more constrained, due to its subordinate status to state and federal authority. Urban regime theory takes this position to demonstrate that informal arrangements at the urban level are vital to city management. Without private backing, a municipal government cannot long remain in power. Yet, without the support of official government actors the objectives of the private sector can become severely constricted. As a result, informal cooperation is needed. Let me be clear though, just because these arrangements are informal, that does not mean that they lack official standing. Rather, the regime brings together official authority through informal methods. As such, while a regime is not fully comprised of individuals formally elected to a position of authority, the cooperation between these elected/appointed actors and the business community creates an official standing for the regime.

What emerges out of these two basic positions is that urban regime theorists interpret the existence of a division of labor in urban governance (Elkin 1987). This division results in the interplay between public regulation and private accumulation (Sites 1997). Local public officials lack direct control of productive assets, but have to promote market interest because the role of government (in U.S. society) is to enable and protect the market (Foucault 2008). As a result,

these authorities develop tactics that will encourage economic activity and garner political support. Often times, these tactics take urban development as the surest means to achieve objectives, utilizing tools such as taxes, subsidies, and service provision (Sites 1997). Simultaneously, private actors control needed economic resources for growth and public revenues. However, despite the preemptive power of business interests, this approach does not see business as able to force public authority in the name of capital gains (Ward 1996).

While businesses may possess a preemptive power, without the legislative authority of official public institutions they will not be able to pursue an effective accumulation strategy. As a result, regimes form by the two sides finding a shared agenda and promoting policy that will allow for this agenda to be met. Furthermore, not all participating interests will share the same objectives for the coalition, but they will recognize that it is in their best interest to retain membership and support the regime (Mossberger and Stoker 2001; Stone 1989; Ward 1996). Therefore, recognition of the privileged position of business interest requires the realization that this is a shared interest, as public authorities achieve their own objectives through the same preemptive power.

Government authority and legitimacy rests on the stability of the market, which imbricates the interests of business and public authority. Hence, what urban regime theory offers is a locally specific understanding of how the private sector pursues accumulation and the public sector pursues regulation, both acting in support of one another. However, not all coalitions are this simple and effective, and it is quite possible for participating actors to perceive of their best interest as not remaining within the alliance (Stone 2001). Therefore, while there is a division of labor observable in US urban political economy, the two sides of this division do not always work in productive concert.

THE CASE FOR THE GROWTH MACHINE

Growth machine theory fuses Marxism with hermeneutics to provide an understanding of the theory and practice of U.S. urban politics. It is a perspective for seeing the urban context, with linkages downward to individual neighborhoods, actors, and interests, as well as upwards into the broader economy of the region and country (Molotch 1999). Based on a 'deceptively simple' logic (Jonas and Wilson 1999), the growth machine interprets urban governance as primarily driven by the pursuit of capital accumulation in the form of growth through the treatment of land as a market commodity to provide wealth and power (Molotch 1976). The imperative for growth serves as a means of allying possibly disparate political and economic interests, due to their shared connection to the space of the city. That is not to say that competition does not occur between various interests, but rather to point out that there is a nested hierarchy, in which those who compete at one level ally at another (Molotch 1976, 1993).

From this, there is an enabling or constraining of growth promotion and land exchange based upon the ability of actors to access the opportunities afforded by higher levels of authority (Miller 1994). However, the authoritative power needed to resolve such a conflict usually resides at levels higher than the one from which activism originates (Molotch 1976). As a result, there is competition between place-based actors and institutions for needed mobile resources, and public authority often encourages this process (Molotch 1993). In other words, developers, planners, and other land-based elites, compete with one another over the economic possibility of land, but at the same time are united behind the common goal of economic growth for the city. These actors and institutions might seek to steer specific development projects towards their own land-interests, but the overall goal is still growth. Consequently, it becomes possible to see every

U.S. city as a growth machine, comprised of various interests acting in concert, and conflict, to pursue growth (Molotch 1976).

For the purposes of this project, the most significant insight offered by the growth machine thesis is that the governance of U.S. cities is predominantly involved in the managing of land-interests in the pursuit of economic growth (Logan et al. 1997). Rather than seeing land as a receptacle, the growth machine thesis demonstrates how meaning and identity becomes experienced through land. Land is the material expression of space, as the human experience of space is inherently tied to the ways in which land is used and imagined (Logan and Molotch 1987). The exchange of land is at the very heart of U.S. urban politics, and through this, land, and buildings on land, becomes a valuable commodity (Molotch 1976). Equally as important is land use, for while the exchange of land is vital, it is only by using the land that it comes to be seen as holding value (Logan and Molotch 1987). Land value becomes tied to the complimenting and contradicting forces of use and exchange, and both of these forces are tied to the growth potential of the land parcel in question. Therefore, the human construction of the land, physically, emotionally, abstractly, etc., is key to the whole process.

From this emerges an understanding that U.S. urban political economy pivots around the question of for whom space is produced and why (Molotch 1999). Land-based elites seek to increase the use and exchange value of the land-parcels on which their interests' rest, by making these land parcels more attractive to growth inducing resources. Therefore, when examining talk about growth, scholarship cannot focus simply on boundary expansion or population increase, but must see development as tied up in these, as well as attempts to increase financial activity, retail and wholesale commerce, the expansion of industry, and the promotion of social relations supportive of growth (Molotch 1976).

These prerequisites for development become the focal point of the growth machine. However, to secure these preconditions, land-based elites must find a way to secure official public support, since they alone do not have access to the regulatory and fiscal measures needed to enable or constrain growth (Logan and Molotch 1987). Therefore, growth machines represent the amalgam of private-and-public-sector elites in pursuit of economic development through land-based growth (Molotch 1976). While a 'rentier' class of developers, realtors, architects, and banks with a significant investment in land and property, are necessary, they cannot promote their agenda alone. These groups seek alliances with the wide array of actors who might also benefit from city growth; such as public authorities, the media, utility companies, etc. Emerging out of these alliances is a fusion of diverse middle and affluent class interests, which leads to the objective of utilizing land as a commodity to ensure revenue streams for machine participants. These actors might deploy symbolic political positions, such as pro-environmentalism and pro-social justice as a means of cultivating support, but these emblematic representations are first and foremost methods for securing growth.

While the original growth machine thesis emerged in 1976, the principles upon which it rests remain integral to an analysis of U.S. urban governance (Hackworth 2006; Jonas and Wilson 1999; Logan et al. 1997). The impetus for growth still serves as the main driver of urban political action, and helps enhance our understanding of who land development benefits, and why (Molotch 1999). Within the current era of entrepreneurial city management (Harvey 1989), the growth machine provides scholars with the ability to recognize how neoliberal political economy has come to dominate the ways in which growth is approached and governed in the U.S. city (Hackworth 2006). By privileging entrepreneurial interests, in the pursuit of flexible capital accumulation, growth machines have been retooled to better manage and promote growth. This

has been accomplished through new arrangements of the government apparatus, in which public authority predominantly serves as an enabler of private entrepreneurial activity. At the same moment, public authority comes to be constructed as needing to behave entrepreneurially, because within the contemporary era of urban growth, coalition formation rests upon the ability to successfully act in, and promote, entrepreneurial activity (Hubbard and Hall 1998).

The growth machine offers an understanding of how an imperative for economic development serves as a constrainer and enabler of coalition formation, as well as a regulator of the social relations within the city. At the heart of this process, is the need for growth machines to find ways in which to present the governing agenda as beneficial to the civic population at large, so as to secure the preconditions for development. This is accomplished by constructing an imagined community that a growth machine purports to represent (Molotch 1976).

Communities are often constructed through exclusion, not inclusion, despite popular imaginings (Foucault 2008; Harvey 1997). However, what makes the community concept productive is its ability to construct, and bolster the individual construction of, identities, through the use of positivist language emphasizing inclusion, while masking its excluding tendencies (Harvey 1997). To accomplish this requires the strategic use of language to cultivate normative beliefs and values (Jonas and Wilson 1999). As a result, a 'moral economy of space' emerges, in which land and people become seen as more or less valuable depending upon their relation to the growth agenda (Cox 1999). The complex, and often controversial, process of such spatial imaginings often relies upon tropes in order to present the city in simplistic understandings (Wilson 1996). Congruent to this, specific populations within the city become cast as readable characters, either antagonistic or protagonist, towards the growth agenda.

GOVERNMENTALITY AND THE GROWTH MACHINE

There is a gap in the literature about the operation of growth machines. While there has been important research on the machine's general use of use of discourse (Barnes and Duncan 1993; Wilson 1996), and specifically the ways growth machines deploy language in support of their agendas (Cox 1999; Short 1999), no studies currently exist that have demonstrated how this strategic use of rhetoric functions to mobilize governmentality. As a force of political power that is now finally receiving much attention in urban studies, I suggest that it is crucial to understand how governmentality operates through growth machines. By drawing on the growth machine thesis, with sensitivity to governmentality, this study will interrogate how one prototypical current urban growth machine utilizes the production of space to promote this activating of governmentality.

Even in the earliest formulations of growth machine theory there is recognition that urban elites cannot force a scheme of land-based economic growth, but must instead find a means of inducing support (Molotch 1976). The reason for this being that there is always the potential for conflict over the use and exchange value of land (Logan and Molotch 1987). As humans go through daily lives they fasten meaning and identity to space. As a result, attachments to land, as the physical manifestation of space, arise. Growth machines must take these attachments into consideration, and find productive ways in which to either incorporate or delegitimize them within the governing agenda. In order to accomplish this, the growth machine constructs rationalities for the growth agenda so as to make it appear normative and natural (Jonas and Wilson 1999).

The objective of government (in a capitalist society) is to collectively manage human populations to allow for the smooth operation of society, and in doing so ensuring the market's

stability and growth (Foucault 2007; Hackworth 2006; Rose and Miller 2010). In the context of the United States, the importance of individual autonomy limits the extent to which the government apparatus is able to directly manage the human population (Foucault 2008; Stone 1989). Theoretically, this also limits the ability of the government apparatus to become directly involved in the market. As a result, government in the U.S. must find techniques for governing that are not seen as directly limiting or constraining individual choice, or as violating the sanctity of the market. Consequently, what is sought is a productive means of governing indirectly (Rose 1999).

In order to accomplish this, government must find ways to regulate society and the market from afar, so that it does not appear to be directly interfering. This is accomplished through the coding of space to represent the objectives of the governance. Directly linked to these spaces are representations of society, as space and society are mutually constitutive of one another (Soja 1980). Therefore, the production of space is central to the deployment of governmentality by growth machines. As the growth machine thesis demonstrates, land is the material expression of space, and land use and exchange is at the heart of U.S. urban governance. Therefore, growth actors mobilize governmentality by articulating a rhetoric that produces spatial imaginings seen as conducive to the development agenda.

The constitution of these imaginings results in the material construction of semiotic spaces. By articulating rhetoric, and producing symbolically infused spaces, growth machines seek to cultivate popular support, and rationalize the governing agenda. This is accomplished by casting space in such a way that it is seen as beneficial for the citizenry, and to signify to people a proper form of social conduct. Thus, growth machines toil to rhetorically articulate and materially produce idealized urban space. This idyllic space is embedded with meaning, which

serves to create, and reinforce the individual construction of identities. As a result, there is the possibility for people to embrace this space, i.e., to extract meaning from its codings and signifiers, which could conceivably control and manage their imaginings and political commitments. Here, they can unwittingly come to support the desires, ideals, and aspirations of growth machines.

CHAPTER 3 - HISTORICAL-GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT: THE ATLANTA
GROWTH MACHINE FROM 1973 UNTIL 1998

SETTING THE STAGE

Metropolitan Atlanta was one of the fastest growing urban areas in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s (Allen 1996; Bayor 1996; Bullard et al. 2000; Henderson 2004, 2006; Keating 2001; Kruse 2005; Rutheiser 1996; Sjoquist 2000). Conversely, the city of Atlanta itself had seen a steady loss of population and jobs since the 1970s (Keating 2001). While several members of the growth machine tried to steer some of the burgeoning development back in-town, the privileging of corporate business interests resulted in little to no coordination of growth (Henderson 2004; Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Stone 2001). The transformation of Atlanta's public institutions into subsidizers for private investment had led to a laissez-faire method for development, in which municipal concerns were subservient to the pursuit of growth (Allen 1996; Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996). One major factor of this approach to development was an over-reliance on highway construction to provide access to cheap suburban land for the affluent and middle class, as well as commercial investors (Henderson 2004). However, this also aided in the continued disinvestment of the city. The loss of middle to upper class residents resulted in a burgeoning urban underclass (Keating 2001), and in-town Atlanta being cast as a space of social deviancy (Henderson 2006; Kruse 2005).

Eventually, unregulated development, and over-reliance on automotive mobility, led to the metropolitan region having some of the worst air quality and traffic indices in the entire United States, and a failure to comply with Federal Clean Air Standards (Bullard et al. 2000; Henderson 2004). In response, the EPA placed Metropolitan Atlanta under a freeze for federal transportation dollars in January of 1998 (Henderson 2004). Fearing a potential stall in development and revenues streams, and the decision of several major corporate actors to not expand into the Metropolitan Atlanta market, the Atlanta growth machine rallied in an attempt to

recentralize growth into the city-center, and several surrounding urban nodes. Declaring that Atlanta had reached a growth crisis, comprehensive regional planning was promoted to try and secure continued growth-inducing resources (Bullard et al. 2000; Henderson 2004).

Beginning with the 1998 freeze of federal transportation dollars by the EPA, and continuing over the next several years, Atlanta's growth machine began to retool itself along the lines of the new urbanism and the creative class. However, understanding how the contemporary Atlanta growth machine came to an adoption of the new urbanism and the creative class requires awareness of how development progressed in Atlanta leading up to 1998. The political, economic, and social conditions that would lead to Atlanta implementing a growth agenda influenced by the new urbanism and the creative class had been in the making for several decades. For that reason, rather than seeing the contemporary Atlanta growth agenda as a paradigm shift in urban growth policy, I interpret the new policy and practice as a rearranging and redeployment of established development politics in Atlanta.

An attempt to tell the full history of Atlanta's growth governance is beyond the purview of this study. For that reason, the historical-geographic context leading up to the contemporary period in Atlanta will be outlined, so as to provide a chronology of the Atlanta growth machine from the 1973 up to 1998. Some references to earlier policy are needed to help frame the material, but in general the late 1970s served as the era in which Atlanta's growth machine fully adopted the neoliberal development agenda that resulted in the late 1990s crisis.¹⁶ Those seeking further information on the historical-geography of Atlanta, and especially the Atlanta growth machine in the past several decades, have a wide range of literature to draw from (Allen 1996; Bayor 1996; Bullard et al. 2000; Bullard et al. 2001; Hankins et al. 2012; Hartshorn and

¹⁶ For an understanding of neoliberal city management see Hackworth 2006; Harvey 1989; Hubbard and Hall 1998.

Ihlanfeldt 2000; Henderson 2004, 2006; Keating 2001; Kruse 2005; Rutheiser 1996; Sjoquist 2000; Stone 1989, 2001; Whitelegg 2000). For now, please see Table 1 for an understanding of the key members of the Atlanta growth machine between 1973 and early 1998.

<u>1973-1979</u>	<u>1980-1989</u>	<u>1990-1998</u>
U.S. Federal Government, Georgia General Assembly, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia World Congress Center Authority, The Atlanta Regional Commission & County Boards of Commissioners for all counties in Metropolitan Atlanta, Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority, Mayor Maynard Jackson, Atlanta City Council, Neighborhood Planning Units, Central Atlanta Progress, The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce	U.S. Federal Government, Georgia General Assembly, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia World Congress Center Authority, The Atlanta Regional Commission & County Boards of Commissioners for all counties in Metropolitan Atlanta, Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority, Mayor Maynard Jackson, Mayor Andrew Young, Atlanta City Council, Central Atlanta Progress, The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, The Atlanta Olympic Committee	U.S. Federal Government, Georgia General Assembly, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia World Congress Center Authority, The Atlanta Regional Commission & County Boards of Commissioners for all counties in Metropolitan Atlanta, Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority, Mayor Maynard Jackson, Mayor Bill Campbell, Atlanta City Council, Central Atlanta Progress, The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, Atlanta Housing Authority

Table 1 - Key members of the Atlanta Growth Machine

ATLANTA'S GROWTH MACHINE

Thanks to a tradition of regime governance in Atlanta that privileged business interests, by 1980 Atlanta had a reputation as a business-friendly location (Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989).¹⁷ Atlanta City Hall has worked with private interests since at least the 1920s, and by the early 1960s Atlanta's civic institutions fully became service providers for corporate investment (Allen 1996; Rutheiser 1996). In 1947, the Metropolitan Planning Commission was formed to try and coordinate county authority in the expanding metropolitan area, and was later transformed into the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC); representing the then 10 county area of Metropolitan Atlanta (Stone 1989).¹⁸ The Mayor of Atlanta chairs the ARC, but since the 1980s, the ARC has often been at odds with City Hall; the organization's objectives are often representations of affluent suburban interests (Henderson 2004). The result has been localized conflicts concerning the location of growth, with an overall alliance on the necessity of development.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the State of Georgia began to take an active role in the management of Atlanta's growth, especially through the Georgia Department of Transportation (GADOT), the major agency for managing and regulating road development (Henderson 2004; Stone 1989). By 1998, the GADOT had become the single most influential institution in the Atlanta growth regime (Henderson 2004; Keating 2001). However, this led to a conflict of interests, as the new agenda sought to limit highway expansion, and by extension the power of the GADOT. Additionally, the latter part of the 1970s, and most of the 1980s, saw frequent conflict between in-town interests and those of the GADOT.

¹⁷ This is an identity the Atlanta growth machine still actively cultivates.

¹⁸ Metropolitan Atlanta now encompasses 33 counties. See Figure 1.

1983 saw the Georgia General Assembly pass the Atlanta Enterprise Zone Act (Brice 2003; Robinson 1991). The enterprise zones created special tax abatements, meant to attract private industrial and commercial investors. By 1985, the Act had been expanded to include private housing developments. Over the next decade and a half the enterprise zone tax incentives became a popular policy tool (Brice 2003). However, the zones usually resulted in large capital gains for private developers and little benefit for the general public, often failing to spur the in-town investment desired by City officials (Rutheiser 1996). Nevertheless, the enterprise zones were seen as a useful tool by the Atlanta growth machine.

Since 1980, the United States Federal government has rarely taken a direct role in the supervision of development within Atlanta (Stone 1989). Yet, federal funding has been a major boon for many of the growth strategies during the past several decades (Allen 1996; Bayor 1996; Bullard et al. 2000; Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989). The use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG), has helped to facilitate Atlanta's agenda of unfettered private development (Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989). Where prior to 1980, the Federal Urban Renewal Administration would have been the oversight institution in the use of such funds; scale-backs during the Carter and Reagan presidencies turned supervision over to municipal agencies. The result in Atlanta was a significant lack of regulation for awarded federal grant monies (Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989). While opposition to fund usage existed, the growth machine at large preferred to limit restrictions on private developers for fear of lost investment (Stone 1989).

Organizations representing Atlanta's business community, especially Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (ACC), have extensive histories of involvement in the Atlanta growth machine (Allen 1996; Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Stone

1989). While the ACC ostensibly represented the business community at large, and CAP was a more select group of civic elites, both organizations actively pushed political agendas in which the advantaging of business interests was seen as the needed means for securing growth and socio-economic prosperity in Atlanta (Allen 1996; Bayor 1996; Bullard et al. 2000; Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Sjoquist 2000; Stone 1989). Leading up to 1998, CAP was integral in coordinating public and corporate interests, as well as co-opting or disarming oppositional growth actors (Stone 1989). The ACC adopted the role of primary civic booster and used its influence throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s to actively cultivate an image of Atlanta as a business friendly destination (Rutheiser 1996).

1973-1979

The major focus for the Atlanta growth machine in the 1970s was continued highway extension into the suburban regions, and the redevelopment of downtown and Midtown Atlanta. Highway expansion was a major topic of contestation, as many in-town neighborhoods opposed highway expansion into the city out of fear of dislocation (Stone 1989). On the other hand, CAP, the GADOT, and several suburban counties, represented by the ARC, strongly supported road development as it was thought to help continued growth by enabling mobility and providing access to cheap suburban land (Henderson 2004; Rutheiser 1996). Meanwhile, CAP, the ACC, and City Hall took an active role in promoting urban renewal efforts in the city-center, which coalesced into the decision to redevelop downtown as a convention space. Similarly, CAP saw Midtown as a site for new affluent residential and commercial activity (Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989).

In 1973, Maynard Jackson was elected as the first African American Mayor of Atlanta.¹⁹ While often seen as at odds with the business political bloc, especially CAP, Jackson was an active constituent of the growth machine, as evidenced by his aggressive support of the expansion of the Atlanta airport and the development of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) (Stone 1989). What caused Jackson to be at odds with the business elite was his aggressive campaign to empower local neighborhood groups through the creation of the neighborhood planning unit system (NPU). The NPU system made it mandatory for neighborhoods to be included in planning decisions, which severely hamstrung developers who previously had been able to operate fairly unfettered. Jackson believed the system would provide political access to poor, marginalized, and predominantly African American neighborhoods, and result in more socio-economic equity within Atlanta. CAP and the ACC saw the NPU system as a hindrance to continued urban growth, as neighborhoods frequently opposed private development proposals.

In an attempt to co-opt the opposition, CAP and the ACC tried to cultivate alliances with the neighborhood movement. The ACC was somewhat successful, as its membership was comprised of all business interests and therefore was able to incorporate some African American entrepreneurs. CAP on the other hand was not able to successfully ally with the NPUs, largely due to the issue of proposed highway expansion into the northeast portion of the city (Stone 1989). The highways were seen by CAP as an opportunity to further open up access for business and growth opportunities within Atlanta, by connecting the city-center with the rapidly growing suburban areas (Rutheiser 1996). However, the neighborhoods saw the expressways as

¹⁹ Every mayor of Atlanta since has been African American.

destructive and dislocating, exemplified in the GADOT's use of eminent domain in the 1960s and 1970s to secure land for highway expansion (Stone 1989).

While CAP had the support of the GADOT, in the early 1970s Governor Jimmy Carter opposed the highway plans, and continued to do so when he became President in 1977 (Stone 1989). Mayor Jackson and the City Council also opposed the plans, and by the end of the 1970s no significant highway construction within the city limits had occurred. Conversely, the continued expansion of roadways into the suburban counties, especially Cobb and Gwinnett, resulted in significant growth, both in population and jobs, throughout the 1970s (Rutheiser 1996). Additionally, the GADOT used suburban growth along highway lines as a means to solidify its own political power within the Atlanta growth machine (Henderson 2004). While in some instances, the ARC attempted to stall road construction, viewing it as not benefiting the region as a whole, the political power of CAP and the GADOT, as well as the ARC's inability to enforce its advisory decisions, often meant construction went ahead.²⁰ Moreover, the ARC was eventually co-opted by CAP and the ACC, and would come to serve as the comprehensive planning body for corporate interests (Henderson 2004).

In the meantime, aggressive efforts to remake downtown Atlanta were put forth by CAP, the ACC, and City Hall. The site of urban-renewal efforts in the 1960s and 1970s, discursively presented as a way to revitalize the area for business investment, the downtown was heavily bulldozed to remove poor African American residents who comprised the majority of the area's population, and who were seen as a hindrance to speculated investment (Bayor 1996; Keating 2001). Despite Mayor Jackson's rhetoric, and actual attempts at policy, to empower impoverished and marginalized neighborhoods, the long-term goal, both for City Hall and the

²⁰ ARC is an advisory institution, and cannot make or enforce policy.

business community, was to turn downtown into a middle-class residential and commercial district, and the concern was that prospective consumers would not want to associate with the poor blacks (Stone 1989). CDBG and UDAG monies were used to fund street ‘beautification’ projects, and the homeless were actively removed (Rutheiser 1996).

By the late 1970s, this trend had coalesced into the decision to transform downtown Atlanta into a convention locale (Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989). The most prominent complex built to promote this new vision for downtown Atlanta was the Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), which was approved for construction in 1970 and opened in 1976.²¹ Two prominent local developers, John Portman and Tim Cousins, competed for the GWCC to be built on their property, which they had secured partially through the urban renewal projects (Rutheiser 1996). Cousins eventually won the contest, and would go on to build a mega-complex adjacent to the GWCC, named the Omni International complex; a combination of sports arena, luxury hotel, and shopping mall. Cousin’s vision of the Omni was a downtown retail and entertainment space, which would pull in suburban visitors due to its convenient location along the newly built MARTA subway line, while also serving as a site for GWCC visitors.

At the same time Cousins won the GWCC location and began constructing the Omni, John Portman was expanding his Peachtree Center complex in the northern sector of the downtown. Originally a combination of several modernist skyscrapers constructed in the 1960s, during the 1970s Portman expanded the project into a mixed-use space meant to attract business and convention interests. Considered successful by entities such as CAP, Peachtree Center was an enclosed complex, designed to make visitors feel sheltered from the surrounding street life

²¹ Additions to the GWCC came in 1985, 1992, and 2002. It is one of the top-five largest conventions centers in the United States. The GWCC is under state, not city, jurisdiction, and is run by a public-private association known as the GWCC Authority.

(Rutheiser 1996). Highly controversial skywalks were constructed to connect the various office towers, and the complex took on a feel of a high-rise fortress, unwelcoming to the urban poor. Portman intended Peachtree Center to make business elites feel comfortable working in the downtown, and utilized architectural design intentionally to separate the space from the downtown and its poor minority residents (Keating 2001).

Meanwhile, the area of Midtown, directly north of downtown, also began to see aggressive efforts for redevelopment. Home to some of the city's oldest streetcar suburbs and wealthiest neighborhoods, Midtown had become something of an enigma by the 1960s, as it was home to a small, but numerous, hippie population (Allen 1996; Bayor 1996; Keating 2001). While several of the old established neighborhoods remained intact, other sections of Midtown began to experience property value decline as the presence of the hippies was seen as unappealing (Stone 1989). In an effort to counter this growing trend, business leaders working with CAP were able to convince City Hall to heighten police activity in the area, and by the 1970s most of the hippie population was removed. Stepping into the hole was an interesting hybrid of homosexual gentrifiers and vice-related establishments, such as brothels (Rutheiser 1996). There was no correlation between the two, and the increased homosexual presence was later credited as leading to the formation of a vibrant independent arts and theatre district (*ibid*). However, CAP pushed for the removal of the vice-scene, and would go on to see the arts and theatre district as hindering the development of potentially lucrative land parcels (Stone 1989).

1980-1989

By the end of the 1970s, the actual city of Atlanta had become almost two-thirds black in its demographic composition, and this was seen by some, especially CAP and its constituent

members, as problematic in attracting in-town investment (Keating 2001; Stone 1989).

Correspondingly, the suburban areas saw increased population and job growth as middle class and affluent whites, and to a lesser degree African Americans, relocated to the Atlanta suburbs (Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996). The 1980s would see the Atlanta growth machine try to redirect some of this growth back in-town, by attempting to (again) recast downtown and capitalize on the speculated potential of Midtown. In Midtown, CAP and City Hall aligned to promote a rapid building boom that gutted the independent arts scene, and failed to achieve the cosmopolitan image desired (Stone 1989). Additionally, the highway issue was once again put forth, as former-President Carter and former-U.S. Congressman-turned-Mayor Andrew Young changed their previous positions, and pushed for extensions on the north and east sides of the city (Allen 1996; Keating 2001; Stone 1989).

By 1980, downtown Atlanta had caught on as a convention space, but not much else. Cousins had to enclose the Omni and devote it entirely to convention and tourist clientele, due to lagging revenues. The site had been successful with local residents, especially young African Americans eager to use the skating rink and arcade (Rutheiser 1996). However, the usage of the complex by a predominantly African American population prevented the Omni from catching on as Cousins, and the growth machine, had envisioned (Allen 1996; Rutheiser 1996). By 1982, the only projects seeing development in downtown Atlanta were Peachtree Center and the GWCC. In 1987, Ted Turner purchased the Omni complex from Cousins, and turned it into the location for CNN's corporate headquarters (Rutheiser 1996). The complex was renamed the CNN Center and was strongly supported by CAP and City Hall, as CNN was seen as demonstrative of Atlanta's ascendancy as a global city. However, the images from CNN rarely, if ever, showed Atlanta itself, only using the city name as an advertising mechanism. Fearing that association

with the surrounding area would cause the CNN Center to fail as the Omni had, the site was turned into a lucrative, but isolated, tourist location. This failed to attract the affluent residential and commercial development that CAP and City Hall had in mind for downtown (Stone 1989).

Concurrently, City Hall used CDBG and UDAG funding to promote downtown residential development projects. These developments at times occurred in areas in need of improved housing stock. As a result, tax abatements, provided by the creation of housing enterprise zones, served to attract private developers (Brice 2003). What emerged, were a few ‘successful’ gated communities that lacked any significant tie-in to the rest of the downtown (Rutheiser 1996). While the developers were able to turn a profit, by and large these projects did not address the housing problem, nor prompt further investment in the downtown (Brice 2003).

In an attempt to redirect growth towards the downtown, and to prevent further disagreements between the business community and City Hall (as witnessed under Maynard Jackson), CAP and the ACC backed Sidney Marcus, a state legislator and friend of the Atlanta business community, as the white candidate in the 1981 mayoral race. However, Marcus was unsuccessful in his bid, as the African American majority rallied behind Andrew Young, a former U.S. congressional representative for Atlanta, President Jimmy Carter’s ambassador to the UN, and the candidate supported by Maynard Jackson. Surprisingly though, Young quickly embraced the mostly white business community and distanced himself from the Jackson administration’s policies. Telling the business elite he could not govern Atlanta without them, Young aggressively pursued development utilizing Reaganomics and arguing that the enabling of private businesses would lead to a trickle-down of socio-economic opportunity and equity for Atlanta at large (Allen 1996; Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989).

While Young allied City Hall with CAP and the ACC, and all parties wished to change the trend of downtown disinvestment, an agreement could not be reached on how to go about achieving this objective. CAP and the ACC wanted to use a privatized approach and tie-in to Portman's Peachtree Center, which had shown an ability to successfully lure businesses through its architectural offerings of isolation (Stone 1989). Mayor Young and City Hall however, wished to revitalize Underground Atlanta, an area on the south of downtown constructed in the 1920s. In a display of symbolic politics, Young was able to rally enough support around the project by casting it as bringing some development to the often ignored southern, and predominantly black, stretch of the downtown, revitalizing downtown as a central business district, and offering opportunities to African American construction contractors and business owners (Allen 1996). However, lingering concerns over the failure of the Omni to bring in affluent clientele kept CAP and the ACC skeptical (Stone 1989).

Conceptually, the City's plan to redevelop Underground seemed wonderful. It would compliment the already existing convention infrastructure and social space, while also directing some of the limited downtown growth southwards (Stone 1989). Additionally, Coca-Cola, the most prominent corporate citizen in Atlanta, supported the effort by pledging to build its World of Coca-Cola museum in the Underground area. However, the project ended up being more complicated and expensive than originally planned, requiring the acquisition of 150 land-parcels from individual owners, as well as difficulty in procuring the needed financial backing (Rutheiser 1996). Even with the securing of \$10 million in UDAGs, and the promise of \$6 million in CDBGs, it was not until CAP eventually came to support the plan to turn Underground into a festival marketplace that the project was able to get the needed backing for completion (Sawicki 1989; Stone 1989). However, when it opened in 1989 Underground was more of a

shopping destination than festival marketplace, and the turnover of businesses was rapid (Rutheiser 1996).

Northwards in Midtown, a conflict was emerging with CAP and City Hall on one side, and neighborhood activists on the other. While City leaders saw the need for a cultural scene in Atlanta, they did not view the independent arts and theatre establishments as an adequate use for the land. Neighborhood activists feared that redevelopment would lead to insulated high-rises, similar to downtown, and destroy the area's vibrant street-life. Relying on the presence of the Woodruff Arts Center and The High Museum of Art to retain a cultural and artistic identity for the area (Rutheiser 1996), City Hall and CAP made token gestures to the neighborhoods and aggressively backed developers (Stone 1989). Where Mayor Jackson had supported neighborhood interests through the NPU system, Mayor Young greatly scaled back the NPU system, and was often antagonistic towards neighborhood activists; seeing them as anachronistic and hindering the new Atlanta identity he envisioned (Allen 1996; Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Stone 1989).²²

In 1982, three proposed MARTA subway stops in Midtown had been selected, and development around the stations was envisioned as high-density and mixed-use, which would contrast with the predominantly low-rise, low-density residential and commercial stock already present (Stone 1989). In an attempt to limit the potential for dislocation, and to garner public support, the sites were all designated as Special Public Interest (SPI) projects. This meant that the project was expected to have a broad enough impact, that while it would be privately developed it would inherently impact the public, who should therefore have a say in planning efforts. However, the SPI designation was a token gesture, and there was little to no regulation

²² Young saw development as a means of erasing the racialized past of Atlanta, and recasting the city as a socially harmonious and business friendly destination.

of developers. Moreover, the Midtown business community was a sub-set of CAP, which severely limited the ability of Midtown activists to slow development (Rutheiser 1996).

Even with public and private support, developers were not able to effectively deliver on the promise of Midtown. Over-speculation led to a building boom and bust, as well as the failure to achieve any significant tie-in to the affluent Midtown residential areas that had successfully weathered the development push. By 1989, a national recession and over-construction resulted in many of the projects stalling out. A landscape of empty lots sitting next to skyscrapers emerged, and seemed to demonstrate the realization of the original fears expressed by Midtown residents (Rutheiser 1996). Buildings that were constructed had massive vacancies, while those that failed saw developer after developer going bankrupt.

The 1980s also saw a re-emergence of the debate over highway construction within Atlanta. The suburbs saw significant growth during the decade, and several suburban edge-cities, such as the Cumberland-Galleria and Perimeter Center, had become important urbanized spaces by the end of the 1980s (Rutheiser 1996). The presence of these commercial and residential nodes north of the city, and the commercial growth experienced in the northern city sector of Buckhead around the same time, led to renewed calls for highway construction. The position taken by CAP was to connect the city's business districts with the suburban edge-cities, while the GADOT wanted to capitalize on the land it had acquired through eminent domain in the 1970s (Stone 1989).

Mayor Young had originally run on a platform of opposing in-town expressways, but he eventually turned around and supported two major highway plans for the area (Stone 1989). The first, a toll-way along the east side of the city, was promoted by the joint forces of the GADOT and former President Jimmy Carter, who saw the area as perfect for his presidential library.

Despite the support of the GADOT, the ARC, and Mayor Young, construction of the east side highway, known as the Presidential Expressway due to its inclusion of the Carter Presidential Library, was blocked in the 1980s. Neighborhood activists and oppositional City Council members were able to stall the plans, which they saw as damaging to the historic neighborhoods and parks along the east of Atlanta (Rutheiser 1996). On the north side of the city, the expansion of the expressway eventually named GA-400 was approved in 1987 to connect Buckhead with the burgeoning northern suburbs. CAP hailed this decision as necessary for connecting the business opportunities in Buckhead with those in the suburbs. However, several prominent African American political figures argued the highway would reinforce the marginalization of poor blacks on the south side and the privilege of white Buckhead on the north, while also undercutting small in-town businesses by privileging large corporate interests (Stone 1989).

1990-1998

As the 1980s came to a close, Atlanta had failed to turn downtown into a residential and retail space for the affluent despite the best attempts on the part of Mayor Young, CAP, and the ACC (Stone 1989). Downtown was seeing frequent convention and tourist usage, as well as prominent businesses operating out of the fortified skyscrapers, but the lack of active (at least ‘acceptable’) street life concerned city leaders (Rutheiser 1996). Interestingly, the over-speculation in Midtown had in many ways directly undercut the attempts to steer growth downtown, as local, national, and international investors preferred the unregulated opportunities in Midtown (Allen 1996). Meanwhile, suburban areas continued to grow in terms of population and jobs, as urban transplants from across the U.S. relocated to Metropolitan Atlanta (Keating 2001; Rutheiser 1996; Sjoquist 2000). Still hoping to redirect some of this rapid growth in-town,

the Atlanta growth machine once again turned to private entrepreneurialism, this time in the form of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games (Rutheiser 1996). The plan for the Olympics was for a corporately sponsored and managed event, with the public sector providing logistical support (Andranovich et al. 2001; Whitelegg 2000).

The idea for Atlanta to host the Olympics originated with local real estate lawyer Billy Payne. Payne forged a close relationship with Andrew Young on the public side, and Horace Sibley, an attorney with connections at Coca-Cola, to rally the corporate sector (Rutheiser 1996). From this alliance, the Atlanta Olympic Committee (AOC) was formed in 1987; a public-private partnership relying on Young for public political connections and private entities for financial success (Coca-Cola played a major role). While the ACC originally declined to support the initial bid, local corporations, as well as Georgia Tech University, provided the needed finance to convince the International Olympic Committee to give Atlanta hosting rights in 1990.

By 1990, Andrew Young had left the Mayor's office due to the city's two-consecutive-term limit. Maynard Jackson won re-election in 1989. However, Young stayed on as a major supporter of the Olympics and came into conflict with Jackson at times. Jackson wanted commitments from the AOC that it would endeavor to not just create venues for corporate sponsors to secure revenue streams, but also invest in the surrounding areas. Young disagreed, asserting that this was not the responsibility of private business. Young had originally advertized the Games as an opportunity to address socio-economic inequity in the city, and to demonstrate to the world that Atlanta was a model for social harmony and inclusion (Keating 2001). Yet, once he left public office he forcefully asserted that the Games were not a welfare program, and actively backed corporate interests at the expense of localized concerns (Rutheiser 1996).

The loss of Young at City Hall also resulted in the AOC re-tooling itself in 1991 as the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG), a private non-profit corporation. Where the AOC had been a public-private partnership, and had taken City Hall into planning considerations, ACOG was entirely privatized and only sought public support as a means to achieve its objectives (Rutheiser 1996). ACOG still had to work with City Hall in planning, but thanks to political connections the organization was often able to convince the State of Georgia to back many of the development efforts. By going above City Hall, ACOG was able to constrain many of its critics and keep the Olympics as a corporate event. This alliance was made possible through ACOG's promise that the Games would be entirely privately funded, which prompted the state government to agree to let ACOG use state facilities for athletic events. However, by the time the Olympics actually occurred, hundreds of millions of dollars had been spent by federal, state, county, and city institutions. ACOG justified this as regular government expenditures (such as paying police over time), and not taxpayer investment (Rutheiser 1996). Regardless of how it was spun, the planning for, and hosting of, the Olympics were accomplished by the subsidizing of private interests by public authority (Rutheiser 1996; Whitelegg 2000). Additionally, the profits from the Games were realized almost exclusively on the private side, with the public sector in all likelihood experiencing a net loss (Andranovich et al. 2001; Newman 1999).²³

ACOG was not always at odds with City Hall, as both entities, along with CAP, wanted to redevelop downtown. ACOG sought an image for Atlanta that would be friendly to corporate sponsors, as well as the athletes and visitors from around the world. City Hall did not oppose this directly, but was concerned about some of the small businesses in the area. CAP was willing

²³ Because the Games were so privatized it is hard to calculate exactly what kind of profits were realized, however it is clear that the speculated public benefits were in large unrealized (Keating 2001).

to support any plan that would (speculatively) bring growth downtown. As a result of this, the homeless were aggressively removed from visible spaces (Rutheiser 1996), while mixed-income housing was seized as a means of removing impoverished residential spaces and people (Keating 2001). While some areas experienced substantial investment due to their proximity to venues for the Games, at least 6 public housing projects were demolished, and many low-income private households in Atlanta experienced significant dislocation (Newman 1999).

Due to its funding coming from the federal government, the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) originally had to stay within federal housing rules to replace any public housing units 1-for-1. This policy made it difficult for ACOG to pursue its plans, especially as Mayor Jackson refused to support any redevelopment that would not compensate for the dislocation of poor residents (Keating 2001). However, with the passage of the Federal FY recession bill in 1995 the 1-for-1 rules were removed. Additionally, in 1994 Bill Campbell took office as Mayor and he was antagonistic towards public housing, seeing it as a cause for continued urban poverty amongst the city's African American population. Using the new federal housing rules, Campbell turned the AHA into an active promoter of mixed-income development, and several of the public housing areas, such as Summerhill and Techwood/Clark Howell, were transformed into mixed-income complexes in an attempt to make them more appealing to middle-class residents and Olympic visitors.

One of the most significant downtown areas receiving substantial investment leading up to the games was Techwood Park, which bordered the Techwood/Clark Howell public housing complex on the north, the GWCC on the East, and the CNN Center on the South. The space was seen as a 'black hole' by most real estate measures, and CAP and the ACC had wanted to revitalize the area for years (Rutheiser 1996). In 1991, ACOG presented a plan to turn the park

into a central green-space, later known as Centennial Olympic Park. While some city officials and local activists saw the park, and its surrounding areas, as a vital piece within the downtown economy, they also recognized the appeal of a downtown green-space. Instead of opposing ACOG, these actors attempted to get considerations heard in the planning. In response, ACOG again went above City Hall to the State, and was able to have the park administered by the GWCC Authority. The result being that the supposedly public park became a corporately operated space (Keating 2001).

While the early 1990s saw Atlanta's growth machine heavily focused on the Olympics, other development projects were also pursued. Tying into ACOG's redevelopment of downtown, Underground Atlanta received renewed interest in transforming the area into an affluent residential and commercial space. The World of Coca-Cola museum had become a successful tourist location, and Underground Atlanta served as the public gathering site for the 1990 announcement that Atlanta would host the 1996 Olympics. The area also became the site for Atlanta's annual 'Peach Drop' to celebrate the New Year (a poor attempt to copy Times Square). However, as feared by CAP and the ACC, anti-urban sentiments limited the project's appeal. With the Rodney King verdict in 1992, Underground saw rioters loot many of the businesses, and the local media sized the opportunity to cast the space as occupied by deviant black youths (Rutheiser 1996). Underground did see a large influx of tourist visitors during the Olympics, but rapid turnover of property ownership and businesses throughout the decade prevented the project from attracting the type of growth envisioned.

In conjunction with the Olympics, a decision to resolve the dispute over the east side expressway was reached under Mayor Jackson. By 1991, neighborhood opposition had resulted in only the GADOT supporting the plan, as Atlanta politicians realized the issue was too

controversial (Keating 2001). However, with the Games coming to the city, Jackson recognized the issue could be a problem in selling Atlanta as a harmonious space, and so he negotiated a deal between the GADOT and neighborhood interests. The highway was partially built, and to appease the neighborhoods the remainder of the land was used to create a linear park.²⁴

Attempting to recapture the building boom of the 1980s, CAP and City Hall rallied around a 1991 plan by Swedish developer G. Lars Gullstedt to redevelop a large section of Midtown. Calling his design a ‘mini city’²⁵, Gullstedt invested over \$100 million in a proposed 11 million square foot project, sprawling across eleven city blocks, in a building market that had already tanked due to over-speculation (Rutheiser 1996). Gullstedt received wide support by the city’s growth machine, partly due to the reemergence of the area as a site of prostitution. While land-acquisition had forced out the vice-scene in the late 1970s, empty lots and slowing construction had led to some licentious behavior creeping back in to the area. Fearing this would further stall the development agenda; Gullstedt’s plan was touted as the means to fuse downtown and Midtown into a single space of dynamic use and investment, and reflect the Olympic vision for Atlanta. However, the Swedish real estate market went into a recession, and this, combined with having invested in another major Midtown project, resulted in Gullstedt going bankrupt by 1993. Nonetheless, by 1995 the Midtown area had bounced back somewhat through the construction of several luxury apartment and condominium complexes, and adapting some of the vacant office space for loft housing (Rutheiser 1996). Later in the decade, Gullstedt’s failure came to be seen as a boon by developers for helping to reduce land-costs (Pendered 2003c).

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Atlanta experienced massive suburban growth during the 1990s. In the decade between 1990 and 2000, the area was one of the fastest growing urban

²⁴ The park opened in 2000 and is named Freedom Park.

²⁵ The ‘mini-city’ moniker would later be copied when referencing Atlantic Station.

localities in the entire United States; only Phoenix, AZ grew more quickly, and only Los Angeles, CA added more people (Henderson 2004). During this time Metropolitan Atlanta saw the largest increase in absolute land area of any urbanized location within the United States (*ibid*). However, almost all of this development was seen outside of the city proper (Keating 2001). Lacking both a significant planning body, and substantial legislation for the regulation of land-use, growth in Metropolitan Atlanta during the 1990s was indicative of a widespread acceptance that the role of public authority was to cater to the whims of corporate investment (Henderson 2004). The GADOT, CAP and the ACC had long promoted privatized growth of any sort, and had not been too concerned with outward expansion. While this had indeed led to a decline in the city-center, and many attempts were made by CAP, the ACC, and City Hall, to steer some development back into the city proper, as long as business was unfettered things were considered copasetic for the growth machine at large.

Thanks in large part to the massive construction of highways all over the region to compensate for the population increase (Chapman 2000), Metropolitan Atlanta eventually had some of the worst traffic and air quality indices in the country (Henderson 2004; Leary 1998). In 1998, the EPA mandated a freeze of federal transportation dollars to Metropolitan Atlanta, which had been noncompliant with Federal Clean Air standards for several years (Henderson 2004). Many potential investors decided to take their capital interests elsewhere, as they were concerned that Atlanta had grown beyond its own control and would soon prove to be a poor-market (*ibid*). This resulted in unregulated development becoming seen by some as ‘metastatic growth’ (Rutheiser 1996), and by 1998, significant calls were being made to address what was seen as a growth crisis (Bullard et al. 2000; Henderson 2004).

CHAPTER 4 - METHODS

DATA COLLECTION

My research began as a pilot study in the winter of 2010-2011, and culminated in an extended six-month examination of Atlantic Station in the spring and summer of 2011. The pilot study was an initial fact finding endeavor to provide an in depth understanding of Atlantic Station. It involved reviewing scholarly literature related to Atlantic Station and familiarizing myself with the Atlantic Station webpage (<http://www.atlanticstation.com/>). This enabled me to understand the basic context in which Atlantic Station emerged, and how the project has been, and is, officially presented. From there, I was prepared to begin a more in-depth investigation of Atlantic Station and its development history. I began by collecting as much relevant data as possible. I implemented a mixed methodology for this data collection that involved: 1) an archival exploration of the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution (AJC)* for any articles and advertisements related to Atlantic Station between 1997 and June 2011, 2) a compilation of policy and planning documents related to the Atlantic Station project, 3) fourteen open-ended interviews with civic and business leaders, developers, architects, and local residents, and 4) multiple visits to the site for observation, as well as numerous informal conversations with residents and visitors of Atlantic Station.

Utilizing the Lexis Nexis database, I conducted an archival search of the *AJC*. The investigative parameters included the key words: Atlantic Station, creative class, and new urbanism. The search covered the dates of January 1, 1997 through May 31, 2011. I originally amassed more than 2500 articles. Through an initial assessment of these documents, I determined that approximately 750 might be pertinent to the study. These articles were arranged chronologically, beginning in May 1997 and progressing up to March 2011. From there, each article was critically examined in depth for content. 334 of them were determined to be relevant

to the research topic. From information found within these articles, and later analysis of policy and planning documents, I also collected several articles from the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, the *New York Times*, *Creative Loafing*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

It was important for the *AJC* to be assessed; I identified it as a crucial data repository. The *AJC* was created in 2003, when the *Atlanta Journal* and the *Atlanta Constitution* merged. While the two papers represented different ends of the American political spectrum, the *AJC* is fairly sympathetic to the business community of Atlanta, and has been substantially supportive of Atlantic Station.²⁶ This does not detract from the value of the *AJC* as a source, but it does need mentioning, as the paper tends to present the information in a specific manner representing the development agenda within Atlanta. As this dissertation is focused on Atlantic Station as a mirror through which to understand Atlanta's contemporary growth machine, I was sensitive to the role local newspapers play as the voice of legitimacy for growth machines (Molotch 1976). Newspapers have a vested interest, as all local businesses do, in continued city development. However, unlike other growth actors, newspapers are seen as representing the city at large, and not a specific interest. Therefore, they gain a status as the spokesperson for development, and serve a vital function in maintaining the local imperative for growth (*ibid*).

Once the data from the *AJC* archives had been gathered and assessed, I initiated an internet search for public policy and private organization documents related to the development of Atlantic Station. Many of these were readily accessible through city, county, state, or federal agency web pages, and the web pages of the private organizations involved in Atlantic Station.

²⁶ Both *The Atlanta Journal* and *The Atlanta Constitution* were sympathetic to the Atlantic Station project.

However, some of the documents proved inaccessible, and were only acquired when I directly contacted private individuals, either on my own or through interview connections.²⁷

The interviews were conducted in an informal fashion, involving both face to face and telephone interaction. Each interview lasted between one and five hours, sometimes broken into several sessions. By taking an informal approach, I allowed each interviewee the latitude to steer the discussion. This enabled the discussants to feel more comfortable around me, while also creating a setting within which pertinent information could be presented (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Such a method helped to cast the discussions as social encounters, and not as objective observation, indicating a specific production of knowledge coming from the conversation (*ibid*).

Initially, interviews were obtained through direct contact with individuals identified through the *AJC* and policy documents as having played an integral role in the process of getting Atlantic Station planned and constructed. Several of these informants put me in touch with other individuals they felt would be useful to speak with concerning the research project. My own social connections also helped to secure interviews, as people familiar with my investigation contacted acquaintances of theirs on my behalf.²⁸

I should note, the information accumulated from the interviews frequently reiterated the statements and reports issued in the *AJC*. Several members of the Atlantic Station project offered me sound bites verbatim to those they issued to reporters for the *AJC* years prior. In addition, my observations and conversations within Atlantic Station rarely contradicted the discourse presented within the *AJC*, and even in those exceptions the statements reflected the spatial-political project of the growth machine.

²⁷ Some of these documents are referenced but require readers to contact the author for access.

²⁸ Connections made through my 25+ years of residency in Atlanta, and my 12+ years of employment in various positions throughout the city.

DATA ANALYSIS

After the articles and documents had been accumulated and arranged chronologically, the material was then cross-referenced with the content provided by the interview discussions to construct a narrative of Atlantic Station. The text was then re-examined, and deconstructed, to identify common themes indicative of the governing strategies involved in the development of Atlantic Station, and the larger Atlanta growth machine. Focusing on the thematic qualities of the ‘smart growth’ agenda allowed me to deconstruct the spatial imaginings of Atlantic Station that had been deployed to indirectly manage the people of Atlanta, and influence economic accumulation.

In my analysis of the text and the identification of themes, I followed the position that language is an irreducible aspect of human social interaction, which is constructed through, and in turn constructs, other essentials of human social interaction (Fairclough 2003). By examining how language is being utilized to construct identity and social norm, scholars can come to understand how actors utilize language as a political strategy (Foucault 1972). Additionally, the production of knowledge is largely linguistic and reflects the relationship between what is known and how it is communicated (Sayer 1992). Therefore, instead of searching for the meaning of the text, the research focused on how the text mirrored the production of knowledge and space, by and for whom, in relation to growth in contemporary Atlanta.

Furthermore, the production of space is not just about the physical construction of buildings, parking lots, etc. It is also about the social production of space; the way space is talked about, imagined, and disseminated in the social milieu. Language plays an integral role in this process. Growth machines deploy language as a strategic mechanism (Wilson 1996), and the production of space is central to any development agenda (Molotch 1999). Therefore,

discourse analysis, drawing upon textual analysis, was utilized to critically examine the mobilization of governmentality in relation to Atlantic Station. Looking at the discursive production of space, representative of the material construction of the space, by developers and other growth actors, illuminated how space was being deployed in a strategy of social regulation supportive of capital accumulation.

The limitations of textual analysis are due to the indirect engagement with data by the researcher. Rather than directly testing for causation, textual analysis relies on the examination of other individual's words and opinions. It investigates how people are interpreting a situation, rather than directly exploring the situation itself. Such an approach is often seen as illegitimate per scientific enquiry (Sayer 1992). However, any production of knowledge is a social practice, and is therefore subject to social relations and circumstances (Lawson and Staeheli 1990). Such an acknowledgement does not disqualify inquiry, but rather concedes that what people know is always impacted by the way they communicate, which in turn reflects, and enhances our understanding of, a specific socio-spatial milieu (Sayer 1992). By examining the ways in which knowledge of the city is presented and communicated, with sensitivity to the place-specific context in which this relationship exists, I argue that scholarship will be better able to investigate and understand how space and society interact within the urban setting.

I take this epistemological position, because such a stance permits the critical examination of the social relationships that lead to the constant re-creation of the city. Such a methodological approach helps to prevent investigation from falling into a restrictive interpretation of scientific research, in which hypothesis testing for regularity is seen as the only legitimate manner of investigation (Sayer 1992). Knowledge is inherently fallible and theory-laden; therefore instead of privileging empiricism to theory, scholars should instead recognize

that explanation is refined through both. Consequently, method is to be found in theorizing as much as in empirical examination. Critical research methods should not constrain social science to a limited course of inquiry and explanation, because the objects for analysis in social science are so varied and complex that no single research model could possibly be effective in all investigations (Sayer 1992, p. 4). Therefore, social science research should be receptive to qualitative methods for research, which are crucial in our attempts to make sense of the city and its constituent components.

In terms of human geographic analysis, this research method is quite beneficial, because it recognizes the importance of place in social science research, and how social interaction is inherently place-based (Cresswell 2004). Place, as a human spatial production, is the fundamental object of human geography (*ibid*). Attempts to make sense of an analytical object are subject to place-specific social interactions, yet using this approach for research allows for multi-level abstractions of understanding (Lawson and Staeheli 1990). Therefore, investigations of the city are able to find detail in a place-specific setting, while also contributing to the broader knowledge of urban studies.

SELECTION OF EMPIRICAL SITE

The decision to study one city, Atlanta, was based on the recognition that a single case study would offer more depth for the investigation than a comparative approach could provide. While I take the theoretical position that growth is the predominant focus of urban politics, and that the new urbanism and the creative class are being widely utilized by growth machines across the United States, my research methods allow for contextual specificity. Every growth machine will be place-specific, and the use of the new urbanism and the creative class will not be identical

in every instance. An analysis of Atlanta's contemporary growth machine allows for detailed analysis on how the implementation of a development strategy, infused with the new urbanism and the creative class, impacts the socio-spatial landscape. From this, the possibility for generalization across urban settings emerges, while still being sensitive to place-specificity. Critically assessing Atlanta's contemporary growth machine provides specificity that can then be used to theorize about the broader concept of urban growth machines in the United States.

The decision to study Atlantic Station specifically, as opposed to comparing it with several development projects across Atlanta, is similar to the reasoning behind the selection of Atlanta's contemporary growth machine for analysis. Examining a single redevelopment initiative offers a depth of analysis not available in a comparative study. Individual development projects might not be indicative of the city as a whole, however their existence within the larger socio-spatial body of the city means that they are inherently influenced by, and demonstrative of, the interaction between actors and structures at the city level (Lawson and Staeheli 1990). Therefore, the specificity of a single development project provides greater analytical detail, which can then be used for a generalized understanding of the larger analytical object of the urban growth machine.

CHAPTER 5 – ATLANTA’S CONTEMPORARY GROWTH MACHINE AND ITS
RHETORICAL ARTICULATIONS

RHETORIC OF THE ATLANTA GROWTH MACHINE

For a growth machine, it is imperative to construct and semiotize space in such a way that people see this physicality as beneficial to themselves and the broader city (Logan and Molotch 1987; Molotch 1976, 1993; Molotch 1999). In its presentation of spatial imaginings, urban growth machines seek to manage human subjects in the pursuit of capital accumulation through land development. Such representing is accomplished through the mobilization of governmentality, and is expressed through rhetorical articulations, which serve to construct and bolster the construction of identities. Through this, people through their daily rounds, rhythms, and thoughts, practice a kind of free thought and choice that supports the growth agenda.

The agenda of Atlanta's contemporary growth machine is one of 'smart growth'. Emerging in response to the decision by the EPA in January 1998, to place Metropolitan Atlanta under a federal transportation funding hold, this agenda seeks to construct a new image for Atlanta, and a reciprocal identity for Atlanta's citizenry. Using the sensibilities and rhetoric of the new urbanism and the creative class, the Atlanta growth machine strives to infuse spaces, such as Atlantic Station, with meaning, in order to advance the 'smart growth' agenda. In this chapter, I first outline the emergence of the contemporary Atlanta growth machine, and then discuss how this machine has activated governmentality through its rhetorical articulations.

ATLANTA'S CONTEMPORARY GROWTH MACHINE

Concerns over the rapid growth of Metropolitan Atlanta had been given voice throughout the 1990s (Bullard et al. 2000; Henderson 2004; Rutheiser 1996). However, it was not until the January 1998 EPA freezing of federal transportation funds that the Atlanta growth machine began to reconfigure itself (Henderson 2004). Looking for a way to recentralize development,

and alleviate traffic and air quality concerns, an agenda of ‘smart growth’ emerged that was heavily infused with the sensibilities of the new urbanism and the creative class. While it would take a couple of years for this scheme to fully catch on, and for projects to begin construction, January 1998 serves as the best possible analytical starting point for understanding the contemporary Atlanta growth machine.

Rather than a paradigm shift, the contemporary Atlanta growth machine is the result of ‘roll-with-it’ neoliberalism (Keil 2009). This means that the privileging of corporate interests by public institutions had become sufficiently normalized and accepted as common practice. Where in earlier incarnations the Atlanta growth machine changed policy (as in the 1980s under Mayor Young), or promoted new policy (e.g. the corporatized Olympic Games), to privilege business interests, by 1998, private development subsidized by public authority had become standard growth policy in Atlanta.

Fearing that the loss of federal financial backing would stall continued expansion, combined with negative representations of Metropolitan Atlanta’s growth in national discourse, several major corporations in the metropolitan area came together to try and address the growth crisis (Henderson 2004). Arguing for a recentralization of development, and alternative forms of mobility, a growth strategy emerged that focused on steering development into select urban enclaves of the northern city and suburban region. This area, known as the ‘favored quarter’ (Leinberger 1997), had emerged during the 1970s-1990s as concentrations of corporate headquarters, chic retail centers, and predominantly affluent white enclaves (Keating 2001). The plan was to cast these urban nodes as ‘little cities’ and “...create a sense of place’ (Saporta 2002)

that would make the sites comparable to New York or Boston in their offerings of public transit, street-life, and cosmopolitan authenticity (Tucker 1999a, b).²⁹

To accomplish this, a comprehensive coalition of business representatives and public officials was needed. From the business end, the major move was to enlarge the ACC by creating the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (MACC). The MACC expanded the number of businesses represented in the growth machine by incorporating suburban-based companies (Henderson 2004). This business coalition strongly pushed for a plan by Bell South to concentrate development around several northern MARTA rail stations (Wilbert 2001).³⁰ Additionally, corporately endorsed community improvement districts (CIDs) were used to try and transform several suburban edge-cities into mixed-use spaces modeled on the new urbanism (Frankston 2003; Saporta 2002).³¹ A CID creates special property tax funds, which the private advisory board can use as they see fit for development in the district. Local public authorities supported the formations of the CIDs, as the districts were speculated to raise the property values in surrounding areas and subsequently enhance tax revenues (Frankston 2003).

In 1999, the MACC was able to pressure the Georgia General Assembly to create a regional planning body with extensive authority to deal with local public institutions: the Georgia Regional Transit Authority (GRTA). GRTA was set up to coordinate development around existing lines of transit, while also expanding the transit options in the metropolitan region. The establishment of GRTA was a deal primarily between business elites and Governor Roy Barnes (Goldberg 1999). While General Assembly approval was needed, Barnes proved

²⁹ These sentiments were closely echoed in many of my formal interviews and informal conversations.

³⁰ AT&T has since purchased BellSouth.

³¹ Notable examples of CIDs, such as the Buckhead Alliance (<http://www.thebuckheadalliance.org/>), the Midtown Alliance (<http://www.midtownalliance.org/>), and the latest incarnation of CAP (<http://www.atlantadowntown.com/>), were also used in-town.

quite adept at maneuvering through the approval process, and there was little actual public discussion (Baxter 1999). Barnes also used his political sway, and his self-appointed MARTA board of directors, to ensure MARTA expansion continued northwards and assisted in BellSouth's plans (Pendered 1999).³² Coupled with this, Barnes worked to loosen the State's environmental planning regulations in an effort to (at least discursively) reign in the negative environmental impacts associated with the previous growth scheme (Goldberg 1998b; Soto 1999a). The hope was that this would not only address the air quality issues in the region, but also help recentralize development and increase property values (Saporta 2002).

Ironically, the contemporary Atlanta growth machine could also count the EPA as a constituent member. While the decision to place Metropolitan Atlanta under a funding sanction had prompted the shift in Atlanta's growth policy, adjustments to the EPA under the Clinton administration had loosened regulatory approaches (Leary 1998), and eventually formed the basis of 'smart growth' policy (see Duany and Speck 2010). As a result, the EPA began to work closely with developers and local authorities across the United States in order to remove the image of the agency as anti-growth and anti-business. This was accomplished by promoting redevelopment projects that would address specific environmental hazards, and (at least discursively) reign in sprawling growth through an emphasis on recentralized development and alternatives to automotive transit (Duany and Speck 2010; Leary 1998). In Atlanta, the EPA became a direct political and financial backer of 'smart growth' projects, with Atlantic Station preeminent among them (Environmental Protection Agency 2000a, b, c). Throughout, questions of why a federal agency charged with the regulation of environmental concerns should now be charged with incentivizing real-estate ventures and economic growth went unexamined.

³² Barnes would also use this position to strongly back the Atlantic Station redevelopment (McCosh 2000).

At the local level, Mayor Bill Campbell used his position as chairman of the ARC to help steer select development projects towards the in-town areas (Salter 1998a). ARC had long represented suburban interests (Henderson 2004), and Campbell's redirection of ARC support towards the city proper was frequently a cause of strife within the growth machine. Campbell and City Hall also actively used tax allocation districts (TAD) as a means to attract developers, and to position the city advantageously (Hairston 1999; Turner 1998). This move prompted the Fulton County Board of Commissioners to promote TAD usage as well (Charles 1999). While this originally upset some suburban municipal and county authorities, as well as developers in those areas, many of these organizations went on to employ TADs of their own (Bennett 2007; Boydston 2006; Frankston 2002; Pendered 2004c).

Out of the alliances and internal disputes that constitute the contemporary Atlanta growth machine, a new vision for Atlanta emerged. While 'smart growth' was the tag line for the agenda, the overarching image was of a glitzy entrepreneurial landscape, in which creative and ambitious people could live, work, and play in progressive and inclusive communities. Environmental stewardship was emphasized to help reinforce this imagining, and to cast previous rounds of growth, such as industrial complexes and highway expansion, in a negative light. However, while the aesthetic of development might have changed, the means of pursuit, publically subsidized private development, remained constant.

DIRECTING PEOPLE TO EMBRACE AN IDENTITY

Atlanta's growth machine, operating to advance its designs, has worked to steer people into sculpting themselves as creative civic residents. The space of Atlantic Station, made a central redevelopment project in the city, is elaborately constructed to help accomplish this.

Through this constructing, this identity is cast as creative and ambitious entrepreneurs/new knowledge workers who are socially liberal, environmentally conscious, and have the aesthetic tastes of enlightened urbanites. While this identity is described as progressive and open-minded, materially it is privileged and exclusive. Yet, these advantages have been disguised by the appeal to a general civic betterment through which this identity is made to serve. In the process, people have become objects in a complex political procedure.

This is reflected in some of the ways in which Atlantic Station has been represented. On the one hand, the plan has looked to capitalize on affluent residents, “The proposed residential plan targets young, upwardly mobile adults who have proven to be the greatest consumers of quality apartments in the Atlanta market area,” (Leary 1998, p.62). However, “the plan also looks to service the existing moderate income families in the area who are also reliant on quality, affordable apartment units,” (*ibid*, p.62). Constituting the site in these terms creates a spatial imaginary. One in which Atlantic Station can be seen as promoting social justice through housing. Offering the comforts of luxury housing to the affluent, situated next to affordable housing, conflates this luxury with an identity of civic responsibility.

“We’re trying to create the most broad based, diverse spectrum of quality housing to manage our risk and create a nice community,” Marc Pollack (in Turner 2001). Pollack’s company, Realty Development, was in charge of the initial housing developments within Atlantic Station. What Pollack’s comments reflect is a meaning infused space, in which Atlantic Station is cast as a diverse and tolerant location. Yet, in this articulation, drawing on creative class rhetoric, exclusion is forged. While creative workers might be coded as progressive and accepting subjects, in reality the creative class reproduces exclusionary privilege (see Wilson and Keil 2008). Housing in Atlantic Station demonstrates this by casting affluent residents as

mentors and role models. As a result, they are seen as members of an inclusive community, in which diversity is discursively promoted, and yet the homogeneity of upward mobility is an accepted norm:

“[Atlantic Station] will look to capitalize on the high educational attainment of the market-rate residents to foster and support the mentoring program that will allow the public-assistance residents to move up to market-rate units one day... The debate as to whether one’s environment or an intrinsic, given-at-birth trait makes them who they are will be simplified at Atlantic Station. The environment will be par excellence, supplying its residents with the tools they need to grow,” (Leary 1998, p.66).

This emphasis on affordable housing is ultimately a coercive tool. People are expected to adopt the characteristics and behaviors of the idealized market-rate tenants. Leary’s comments draw upon spatial deterministic logic to normalize the assumption that by exposure to the proper socio-spatial milieu, individuals will become productive members of society through their ability to pay market-rate rents. Implied in Leary’s statements is that failure to become an ideal subject is the result of an individual’s own innate flaws, and not the result of outside factors. Hence, diversity and tolerance are used as disciplinary mechanisms to ensure that people become entrepreneurial self-starters, and afford market-rate housing.

Growth machine operatives cast Atlantic Station as a site of diversity and tolerance so as to make it appear as if the space is open to a wide range of identities. This in turn directs people into viewing themselves as tolerant and progressive:

“They (Atlantic Station residents) are college students, young professionals, retirees, empty-nesters. Some are single, some married (with or without children). They are gay, straight, black, white, Asian and Hispanic. The congregation includes hairstylists and kindergarten teachers, accountants and business people,” (Janich 2005a).

This description, coming from an *AJC* journalist, reflects the type of milieu that proponents of the creative class champion: a wide representation of race, class, and age, all living together in an

inclusive and innovative space. While this might sound idyllic, there is a coercive element to it as well. Certainly the space is diverse and tolerant by certain measures of identity. Yet, it is simultaneously used to direct people into embracing privilege. For example, “Quality design, quality materials, and quality people provide the necessary ingredients to make the recipe for success,” (Leary 1998, p.66). The term quality is not a universal constant. In this case, quality is linked to Atlantic Station’s economic success. Therefore, while housing in Atlantic Station is represented as a civically responsible act, it serves a dual disciplining function that conflates quality with profit.

Despite popular imaginings to the contrary, homogeneity is often interpreted as preferable to diversity in the process of capital accumulation (Carbado and Gulati 2003). That is not to say diversity is not important, for it is used strategically to co-opt support and to discredit opposition. In this manner, diversity becomes a trope to mask the privileged homogenous identity. This is observable in comments offered by a former Novare Group Inc. employee. Novare Group developed one of the luxury hotel/condominiums in Atlantic Station, and according to the interviewee, worked closely with other housing developers to sculpt an ideal living space and its occupying subject:

“The planners were building units to attract 25-35 year olds with upwards of \$75 thousand in income. Things like race weren’t considered by the developers, because the assumption was the affluence of everyone would render them all similar,” (Interview with former Novare Group employee).

What becomes apparent through statements such as these is that the ‘quality’ subject sought in Atlantic Station in some ways runs contradictory to the rhetoric of diverse inclusion. Ergo, what is observable through this contradiction is that people have been directed to embrace a homogenous identity seen as conducive to economic accumulation. While in the same moment perceiving of this identify as diverse, open, and progressive, despite its excluding tendencies.

Resultantly, the conflation of quality with profit undermines the inclusive rhetoric, and material expressions of exclusion emerge (see Jakob 2010).

Rather than striving to build a truly progressive and inclusive space, proponents of Atlantic Station seek to direct people to embrace an exclusionary identity masked by progressive tropes. Thus, in its rhetoric, Atlantic Station at least discursively offers, "...a little bit of everything for the lives that people lead," Kristin Mueller, executive director for Jones, Lang, LaSalle Americas Inc, which was the former operations management company for Atlantic Station (in Janich 2005b). People in Atlanta are not being forced to embrace this identity; they are being guided towards it through rhetorical articulations that allow them the latitude to exercise some measure of choice. "By offering people a dynamic new space, we open up the choices available to them," (Interview with Atlanta Development Authority Executive). Commentary such as this is significant, because the planning for, and of, individual choice indicates the activation of governmentality (see Rose 1999; Rose and Miller 2010).

In all likelihood, the proponents of the contemporary Atlanta growth machine only dimly recognize how their actions in coding space and producing knowledge reinforce class segregation. The tropes of inclusivity and progressivism found within the new urbanism and the creative class makes it difficult to see how exclusion is maintained and promoted. This reflects the assumed transparency and innocence of space within capitalist societies. While some, such as former EPA Administrator Carol Browner, have argued that Atlantic Station, "...take(s) us into the future by rediscovering the joy of our past," (Soto 1999b), casting Atlantic Station as a rebirth of urban Atlanta is a sanitized memory of the past. Nonetheless, these sanitized renderings coerce people into accepting that this type of development will benefit society at large by providing a diverse and progressive array of subjects and social relations. "... I'm absolutely

a traditional urbanist because it's walkable, its sociable, its sustainable, it doesn't segregate people," Atlanta architect Ellen Dunham-Jones (in Duffy 2007). Assuming that there is a nostalgic urbanity to be rediscovered that did not segregate and privilege is problematic, and indicative of that very same privilege and exclusion (see Marcuse 2000). Promoting this image of urban space seeks to productively co-opt people into the growth agenda. Directing people to embrace an identity where they perceive themselves as progressive, and ignore their own privileged social status and the exclusive social relations that constitute that privilege, accomplishes this. Consequently, the contemporary Atlanta growth machine wants subjects who will not question their elite social status, thanks to their individual perceptions of social enlightenment.

In addition to progressive social views, the quality subject of Atlantic Station is also cast as environmentally conscientious. Growth machines often appeal to progressive politics, such as environmentalism, as a legitimacy-seeking maneuver (Molotch 1993). In the case of Atlantic Station, promoting environmental stewardship serves to reinforce the image of progressive citizen subjects:

“Developers built Atlantic Station to fit certain types of people --- environmentally conscious singles and families who like shopping, hate commuting and still want to be, literally, in the middle of it all,” (Gumbrecht 2008).

This *AJC* journalist's statements demonstrate that despite all of the rhetoric of inclusion and diversity, Atlantic Station was built for a specific type of person, and to inaugurate a certain kind of class based redevelopment. Discursively, this subject is an enlightened individual who is to view her or himself as progressive, thanks to their environmental consciousness and desire for urban amenities. However, this identity is also based on income. Consequently, the emphasis placed on environmental consciousness by proponents of Atlantic Station serves a similar

function to social progressivism. It is a trope, meant to convince people to embrace an identity for themselves without questioning privilege. The issue of exclusion due to income-level is not considered because of one's supposedly enlightened politics.

The new urbanism and the creative class, which emphasize environmental considerations as indicators of proper urban subjects and development, use this position. I do not propose that the new urbanism and the creative class are incapable of positively addressing ecological concerns. Rather, I suggest that these concerns are used strategically to secure needed support for the growth agenda:

“...exemplified by redevelopments like Atlantic Station, the smart growth movement allows the environmental community to be part of building something positive and visible, and provides the opportunity to reach people through the construction of the very places they live, work and play,” (Leary 2006).

The opportunity to reach people through the space of their everyday lives demonstrates the use of ‘smart growth’ as a rhetorical element in the mobilization of governmentality by the contemporary Atlanta growth machine. It reflects the co-optation of the environmentalist community, and the directing of people through the built-environment. Reaching people through the construction of the places they live, work, and play is a direct reference to spatial determinist thinking. It fosters an assumption that by providing an environmentally responsible space, people will embrace an identity for themselves that is reflective of proper social relations and everyday behaviors:

“...Atlantic Station is having a significant and positive impact on Atlanta's environment and has become part of the everyday lives for thousands of people.... We had one good idea: let's clean up a steel mill,” (Leary 2006).

Infusing space with the image of environmentally responsible urban growth helps to convince people that development will lead to wide-reaching positive outcomes. By continuously referencing the cleaning up of the steel mill, Atlantic Station is represented as having positive

impacts on Atlanta's development and the lives of its citizens. Therefore, people who identify as environmentally responsible may consider themselves progressive, and be deservingly privileged.

One way in which this agenda has been put forth is through the promotion of pedestrian activity and transit ridership. "Atlanta is a city where we are conditioned to drive. We want a community where you're conditioned to walk," Brian Leary (in Boone 2007). While walking might in fact be physiologically beneficial, and Atlantic Station has by some measures had a positive impact on people's physical health (Weissman et al. 2010), the language here is meaningful. Governmentality is a process of conditioning civic behavior. Ergo, the invoking of the imperative to walk implies the mobilization of governmentality. Simple ideas, like being able to walk to work, are deployed to make it seem as if this type of urban growth is idyllic. "This (Atlantic Station) is an example of what we should become. People will say, 'we can have sidewalks, because I've seen it'," Brian Leary (in Hughes 2005a). The space of the sidewalk reflects the environmentally enlightened subjectivity sought by developers and citizens alike. Growth actors do not force an identity upon people; they provide opportunities seen as desirable to specific subjects. "We hope we can build (a complex) where people can live and walk to work," Charles Brown, head of CBR Realty and Atlantic Station LLC executive (in Salter 1998d). People perceive of themselves as progressive liberal subjects thanks to their environmentally enlightened position of pedestrian activity, while ignoring that their inclusion within this space is conditioned and supports the exclusive development schema.

In this way, Atlantic Station as environmentally responsible redevelopment has been pushed with the promise of social benefits through ecological remediation. As the *AJC* (2000) notes, "All seem to recognize the value of turning a polluted industrial site into an attractive,

stylish, transit-orient complex that will also boost growth of the in-town area.” These sentiments were echoed in several of my interview encounters, such as, “we cleaned up an incredible environmental hazard, and in its place gave the city a fantastic space for future development,” (Interview with JDI Executive). This positive sounding language casts Atlantic Station as a responsible approach to growth, which will address environmental concerns by cleaning up a polluted site, promoting public transit usage, and serving as a catalyst for further development. It directs people to embrace an environmentally conscious identity through a ‘smart growth’ design:

“I believe in smart-growth principles and not adding to sprawl and traffic. My goal is to live and work in the same place. I’m thinking about not having a car. Theoretically, that will be possible at Atlantic Station,” Lisa McCard, graduate student at Georgia Tech, urban planning department (in Pendered 2004a).

“The environment will benefit. The public will benefit. Private investors will be able to make a profit. And one of the most important things is that people who are in the project will be happy, healthy, productive people,” Charles Brown (in AJC 2005).

As Rose (1999) notes, a happy and productive subject is the result of governmentality. The idea of happy, healthy, and productive people may not appear sinister, yet in the case of Atlantic Station it is indicative of how space is used to induce people into self-subjectivity. Casting Atlantic Station as providing this wide range of positive outcomes serves to normalize an identity of environmental stewardship. It convinces human actors to embrace environmentalism through their support of Atlantic Station, and by extension the growth agenda. In this acceptance, they may be only dimly aware of their exclusive position, because of their perceptions of progressiveness.

Through the tropes of diversity and environmental stewardship, proponents of Atlantic Station seek to direct people to embrace an identity for themselves as enlightened urban

dwellers. This is accomplished by linking a progressive social and political milieu with amenities and a sense of pride in urban living. Both notions of the new urbanism and the creative class emphasize the need for cities to have middle and affluent class amenities. These amenities, made normative and city serving, masks that social privilege is constructed through one's inclusion in these spaces. With subjectivity constituted through space, rhetorically presenting 'smart growth' as creating ideal spaces invariably produces privilege. Atlantic Station demonstrates this production:

“The proposal for the old Atlantic Steel property... is a perfect place for a mix of shops and homes... small shops can enhance the appeal of residential neighborhoods when they provide the amenities residents need and want, from dry cleaning to gourmet groceries to overpriced coffee,” (Tucker 1999b).

It is entirely possible this journalist was being sarcastic in these comments. Nonetheless, she indicates that people are directed to sculpt identities through consumption. The ability to procure gourmet groceries and over-priced coffee is a luxury, available only to those with a certain level of income. This supports the notion that, “Developers built Atlantic Station to fit certain types of people,” (Gumbrecht 2008). In Atlantic Station, people can feel comfortable in their shopping habits, because they identify as cosmopolitan and progressive individuals. The ability to purchase luxury commodities is cast as an indicator of proper civic behavior, rather than a mark of social privilege. Invariably, the luxury of being able to access Atlantic Station is linked to a proper urban identity.

An example of this can be found in the inclusion of an IKEA home furnishings store within Atlantic Station. People who frequent IKEA often identify, and are identified, as thrifty and possessing a proper aesthetics (Ritson et al. 1996). Within Atlantic Station, the inclusion of an IKEA store serves to legitimize the space as living up to its new urbanist design:

“For countless shoppers, the reality of a trendy mixed-use community that rose from the ruins of an old steel mill in Midtown will hit home June 29 when IKEA opens its doors at Atlantic Station,” (Pendered 2005b).

The presence of IKEA has served to legitimize the claim of Atlantic Station as a true urban space through its provision of exclusive shopping opportunities. Bringing in IKEA was not simply developers desiring to meet consumer demands. It was also a political strategy to direct people to accept, and construct, an understanding of proper urban behavior. As local resident Michael Bolan states, “IKEA in Atlanta is long overdue... Atlanta is a young and cosmopolitan city. It seems a perfect place for IKEA,” (DeGross 2002). Bolan’s comments indicate that people in Atlanta are being obliquely managed through the provision of spaces, such as IKEA, in which they construct a seemingly progressive identity of cosmopolitan living that is tied to consumptive habits.

Consumptive behavior is used as a sign of status. It directs people to embrace an image of themselves through their location within the urban sphere, and their ability to spend money. Activities such as shopping, dining, and living, are behaviors through which people are directed to sculpt an identity for themselves. Within Atlantic Station, these behaviors are reflective of a privileged social status. Not only is one a privileged subject thanks to being located within a ‘smart growth’ development, they become desired and desirable social subjects courtesy of their ability to actually engage in consumerist activity. For example, as noted by an *AJC* reporter, within the surrounding Midtown area several “...funky retail shops catering to those with a good amount of disposable income” were used to entice people into accepting the development agenda (Pendered 2003b). The inclusion of these shops was part of a larger agenda to cater to people who, “...typically are single, typically are 25 to 45 years old, and typically are affluent,” local developer John Long (in Pendered 2003b).

In order to attract these ideal subjects, Atlantic Station, "...offer(s) an upscale alternative for the downtown and Midtown markets," (Pendered 2003a). Embracing this upscale identity speculatively translates into the type of in-town development that the growth machine seeks from its 'smart growth' agenda. It serves to rationalize that, "For the first time in a generation, in-town is to offer shiny neighborhood amenities similar to the suburbs," (Pendered 2003a). However, thanks to the emphasis on 'smart growth', and the superiority of urban living, these amenities can be enjoyed with a sense of enlightenment rather than privilege:

"The project, which aims to turn a blighted in town industrial complex into a self-contained urban village complete with hotels, movie theater, restaurants and apartments, has been praised as a 'smart growth' alternative... and a needed shot in the arm for a stagnant part of Midtown," (*AJC* reporter, Charles 1999).

Through these rhetorical articulations then, the contemporary Atlanta growth machine uses the creative class and the new urbanism to create the conditions for governmentality to operate. Basing the 'smart growth' agenda on an ability, and necessity, to attract creative entrepreneurs, the machine constructs, and fosters the individual construction of, an ideal population of enlightened urbanites who promote social tolerance and environmental responsibility. This rhetoric constitutes a select form of urban living as the ideal behavior for people in Atlanta to embrace and follow. As such, it is intended to direct people to embrace a supposedly cosmopolitan lifestyle and identifying themselves therein. In this context, acceptance of this identity reflects an acceptance of the governing agenda.

DIRECTING PEOPLE TO ACCEPT THE 'GOOD' CITY

The 'good' city is another elaborate rhetoric served up by Atlanta's current growth machine. The 'good' city is presented as an obtainable idyllic urban space in which people behave in civically responsible ways that help to create a globally competitive, glistening city.

Through constructing and disseminating an image of the ‘good’ city, the growth machine strives to reinforce the conceptualization of a proper citizen subject, proper social relations, and proper everyday *habitus*. Within contemporary Atlanta, in the discursive formation, the ‘good’ city is embodied in Atlantic Station, and is expressed as a unique destination and vibrant city center.

Atlantic Station’s potential as a city economic catalyst is implied in its ability to turn a strategic parcel of land into a fiscally robust space:

“Atlantic Station is moving Atlanta forward by cleaning up the steel plant and returning a strategic parcel to the heart of the city... the Atlantic Steel property’s full potential will finally be realized through the Atlantic Station redevelopment,”(Leary 1998, p.4-5).

“Atlantic Station gave Atlanta a massive economic stimulus. It not only cleaned up the steel mill, it also created new housing opportunities and opportunities for businesses,” (Interview with City Council representative).

Portraying Atlantic Station this way directs people to view this space as representative of the type of ‘good’ city Atlanta should be. Because Atlantic Station is rhetorically cast as responsible and ‘good’, criticism is disarmed and people are directed to support the growth agenda as responsible and ‘good’. Using the rhetoric of ‘smart growth’, the goal of this image is to reinforce a vision of Atlanta that supports the growth agenda, and in doing so ensures that neoliberal development continues unabated. In this context, Atlantic Station has served as the quintessential representation of the ‘good’ city. At a general level, Atlantic Station signifies all that Atlanta should aspire to be. It is a space, paraphrasing Irving, which provides an optimal environment for city livability, city work, city creativity, and city class aesthetics (Irving 2009).

At the core of this rendering of Atlantic Station, as a metonym for the ‘good’ city, the site has been aggressively presented as an idyllic destination. Growth representatives cast Atlantic Station as a distinctive and genuine urban locale in order to make it appealing to subjects, and so the project can be seen as beneficial for Atlanta at large. “With the proposed Atlantic Station

development,” to one prominent developer, “Atlanta has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a unique city within a city” (Saporta 2000). In constructing this image of the ‘good’ Atlanta, the growth machine has strived to rationalize development and manage civil society. The project is to code space in such a manner, as it directs people to embrace the image of Atlanta that the growth machine desires. In presenting Atlantic Station this way, the growth machine activates governmentality by directing people to accept the way space is used and what space means.

The meaning and use of Atlantic Station has been presented as the type of unique urban atmosphere every ‘true’ city requires (see Kenny and Zimmerman 2004). Yet, while Atlantic Station’s design has been used to promote a spatial imagining of what the ideal Atlanta should look like and be, its distinctiveness is contradictory to its design:

“With two-story brick buildings, street-facing display windows and wide sidewalks, Atlantic Station’s center of commerce looks more like Faneuil Hall in Boston or Georgetown in Washington than anything else in Atlanta,” (Van Dusen 2005a).

The commercial center referred to here, ‘The District’, is the most recognized aspect of Atlantic Station and was intentionally “fashioned in the mold of Boston’s Back Bay or Chicago’s Lincoln Park or New York’s South Street Seaport, real neighborhood shopping districts,” (Turner 2001). The ‘good’ Atlanta, embodied in Atlantic Station, is a simulacrum that is meant to direct people into perceiving space, and by extension themselves, as distinctive. The authenticity of Atlantic Station is constructed through the directing of people to embrace this vision:

“They’ve got to do something dramatic and (make it) very much a destination site --- something that makes people say, ‘This is a new center of activity and I have got to go there’.” John Holder, local office developer (in Salter 1997a).

Modeling Atlantic Station on preexisting urban locations, such as Faneuil Hall and Georgetown, is a way of casting the site in dramatic fashion to convince people that Atlantic Station is a new

dynamic center of activity. Yet, this supposedly distinct space is a copy, which contradicts a sense of authenticity.

However, such a contradiction is ignored, and is possibly irrelevant, because in directing people to embrace this vision for Atlanta, the growth machine toils to convince subjects that such a space is indeed authentic. “What we are bringing now is a sense of a place in the heart of Atlanta. We’re going to deliver,” Jim Jacoby (in DeGross 2001). By so presenting Atlantic Station, people are told that the construction of the project will indeed provide Atlanta with a unique sense of place, similar to the sites drawn on for inspiration. That sense of place is one of exclusive prestige, as indicated by the use of fashionable and elite sites, such as Faneuil Hall and Georgetown, for inspiration. This is not a destination for the urban poor and working class. Rather, Atlantic Station is a space for the supposedly progressive and materially privileged (i.e., the ideal urban subject). In this way, Atlantic Station is rendered an exclusive atmosphere.

Alongside the representation of Atlantic Station as exclusive and unique, the growth machine generates a rhetoric that indicates Atlantic Station is the new center of Atlanta:

“There are few great cities in the world that do not have a vibrant center city. That’s what Atlantic Station is going to be. Atlantic Station is going to be the rebirth of ‘main street’ downtown --- just relocated,” Bill Clarke, retail consultant (in Van Dusen 2005b).

These comments create a spatial imagining in which the center of Atlanta had to be relocated. The former center of Atlanta, downtown, had been declining for several decades by the late 1990s. Specific sites, such as the GWCC and Peachtree Center, had measurable levels of success, but downtown Atlanta had essentially ceased to exist as a vibrant cosmopolitan space decades ago. Yet, the disinvestment and decline of downtown opened up opportunities for innovative growth actors who saw potential in the Midtown area:

“The killing of downtown Atlanta left Midtown as the only logical place for a cosmopolitan city-space in Atlanta. I had been telling people for years Midtown was the place where growth would and could happen in the city. It made sense. The city and region had been growing linearly north for decades and the only option available was Midtown,” (Interview with a local architect).

Because growth had been steered towards the ‘favored quarter’ for years, and the contemporary growth agenda followed suit, Midtown was seen as the logical site for a relocated city center in Atlanta. Yet, this logic reflects the tendency for growth in Atlanta to track northwards, which in turn reflects the racial and class biases within Atlanta. Nevertheless, through this rhetoric the Midtown location of Atlantic Station means that it indeed became the new city center.

In emphasizing the need for Atlanta to have a vibrant city center, rooted in Atlantic Station, the growth machine strives to present an obvious solution to the current social, economic, and environmental issues facing Atlanta. As Mayor Bill Campbell stated, “Obviously, having a strong vibrant city center [referring to Midtown] is vital not only for Atlanta but the entire region,” (in Turner 1998). Now, in elaborate rhetorical articulation, the strong and vibrant city center is Atlantic Station, continuing a trend of privileging northern growth in the city. Out of this discourse, the choice of Atlantic Station makes perfect sense for helping promote the vision of the ‘good’ Atlanta:

“Atlanta’s in town renaissance is upon us...the redevelopment of Atlanta’s midtown Atlantic Steel property into a mixed-use community offering the best commercial, residential, and entertainment space in the region will provide the people of Atlanta with an exciting new place to live, work and play,” (Leary 1999, p.1).

By linking Atlantic Station to Atlanta’s in-town renaissance, people are being induced to embrace the project, and a wider vision of Atlanta. Left silenced is how development is continuing to be used as an exclusionary tactic. Emphasizing the mixed-use design casts the site

as a desirable and responsible form of growth, and strives to convince people to accept this relocation of central Atlanta as indicative of the ‘good’ city:

“When that Wachovia sign went up, everybody realized that [Atlantic Station] was the center of Atlanta. Atlantic Station is ‘dead center’ in terms of location... Because of that --- plus its streets of stores and ample parking --- the project can and probably will lure office users from other parts of metro Atlanta, and even companies happy with suites in the suburbs...” Tim Holdroyd, Midtown real estate broker (in Woods 2005).

In this context, by presenting Atlantic Station as the new city center the growth machine strives to materially concentrate development in the site’s idealized central location (read northerly, affluent, and predominantly white).

In teasing out this theme of the ‘good’ city, the growth machine deploys presentations of the space as addressing environmental concerns as a political maneuver striving to further the vision of Atlantic Station as a unique, needed urban center. This is an effective strategy, because it combines multiple sensibilities into a discourse that codes Atlantic Station in a positive manner, while simultaneously drawing attention away from how subjects are being conditioned by the image of the ‘good’ city and its privileged foundations. For example, in promoting Atlantic Station, growth actors are able to combine the progressive seeming politics of environmentalism with economic development, “New Urbanists liked to point to its [Atlantic Station] success in transforming a desolate industrial site into a thriving commercial and residential district in the heart of Midtown,” (Southerland 2011c). The goal is to have people accept that Atlantic Station has transformed Midtown into a strategic location for commercial opportunity and urban living. In a statement, Charles Brown said that, “The 138-acre tract (Atlantic Station), contaminated by nearly a century of steel-making, offers a unique opportunity for adding a huge new sector to the city center,” (in Salter 1998c). The evidence of the

remediated industrial site combines environmental stewardship and commercial opportunity, and strives to direct people into viewing exclusive private developments as widely positive.

The conflation of environmentally responsible development and economic growth steers people to imagine the ‘good’ city as environmentally conscious, progressive in its approach to residential access and economic viability. Rhetorically, the significance of Atlantic Station is to be found in its ‘smart growth’ inspiration, which has been thought to improve environmental and economic conditions for Atlanta by recentralizing development at large. “That sort of high density, live/work/play environment is just what local planners have touted as an antidote to the car-oriented sprawl...” (Goldberg 1998b). The justification behind this assumption was that:

“...Concentrating residents in a close-to-downtown-live-work-play complex such as this is, theoretically, more environmentally friendly than developing housing, offices and recreation apart from one another,” (AJC 1998b).

The machine articulated “...Atlantic Station is expected to help improve the region’s air quality by reducing the need for car trips to get around,” (Pendered 2005a). In becoming the new city center for Atlanta, Atlantic Station has discursively fixed the growth crisis and its detrimental side effects.

However, ‘smart growth’ is not just about car trips and auto emissions. It is about using environmentally friendly design to legitimize ‘smart growth’, and to convince human actors that this vision of Atlanta is the proper one. Representing Atlantic Station in this manner is a mobilization of governmentality. This rhetoric creates a meaning for the space as responsible urban growth, and simultaneously constructs a proper use of the space that supports this position. The rhetoric strives to normalize a neoliberal approach to development by convincing the public that it will be protected from the horrors of suburban sprawl and economic stagnation.

While economic stagnation is certainly a concern for the growth machine, the notion that this type of development will alleviate environmental concerns and result in wide-ranging economic opportunity is a means through which support for the governing agenda is produced, and not an end in itself:

“Redeveloping the Atlantic Steel site would redirect some of that growth inward, reclaiming an industrial wasteland that happens to be connected to the existing infrastructure,” (Staff 1999).

“We took a little used piece of property, in a prime location, and cleaned it up. In doing so we opened up new growth opportunities for Atlanta and its citizens,” (Interview with City Council representative).

Atlantic Station is a symbolic condensation for ‘smart growth’, because of the comprehensive approach to the project’s design and intended usage. It is this rationality that the contemporary Atlanta growth machine has articulated. It follows that through this representation of Atlantic Station, the project is cast as recalibrating the growth scheme at large by addressing the social, economic, and environmental issues that had emerged in the late 1990s:

“The transformation of a major in town property from an unsightly steel mill into a sparkling cluster of office towers, residences, shops and restaurants promises to be a welcome boon to Atlanta and its future...” (AJC 2000).

This agenda is bolstered by (and is based upon the premise of) continuous growth.

Emphasizing the uniqueness of the space, the importance of a vibrant city center, and the logic of ‘smart growth’, are all rhetorical articulations that have been used to construct Atlantic Station as the type of urban space that can provide continuous growth to the city. This suggests that the public should accept that Atlanta has to behave as a growth machine in order for locations like Atlantic Station to exist. This is observable though the provision of a premier business environment within Atlantic Station:

“Atlantic Station is moving Atlanta forward by giving businesses the opportunity to exceed. It is giving them the opportunity to succeed by providing the premier

environment to conduct business in the Southeast. It is an environment with first-class architecture and first-rate amenities,” (Leary 1998, p.76).

Atlantic Station has been coded as a place of first-rate buildings and amenities for businesses looking to succeed. Discursively, this is the type of atmosphere in which entrepreneurs will flourish, and therefore ensure that Atlanta has continuous economic growth. In providing this atmosphere, Atlantic Station has helped to reinforce the image of the ‘good’ Atlanta as one that constantly develops and prioritizes growth. However, actually directing people to embrace this vision requires more than just opening up Atlanta to private enterprise. It necessitates the connection of continuous development to the perception of individual identity. Within Atlantic Station, one manner of accomplishing this has been to cast the site as a stimulus for job creation.

The notion of Atlantic Station as a space opening up new job opportunities, normalizes the desires of business interests and strives to direct people to accept that a ‘good’ city is one in which a privileged business sector is a prerequisite. In the rhetoric, employment opportunities exist because Atlantic Station is a space of business opportunity. As the rhetoric surrounding Atlantic Station is produced, and then reproduced, it is used strategically to manage Atlanta and its citizenry by highlighting the successful outcomes the project has brought (or speculatively will bring) about:

“Atlantic Station is going to have a full range of job opportunities for people, from their first job to probably their last job... When Atlantic Station is complete, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people will work there in everything from unskilled to professional services,” Brian Leary (in Hairston 2003).

Through representations such as this, people are directed to view a business privileging development as an outgrowth of a distinctive urban space. This rhetoric ultimately speaks to what Atlantic Station is, and how it is to be used. Here, the ‘good’ city is one that takes employment for its citizens as a priority. However, in reality the kinds of employment that might

follow are silenced as a potentially problematic issue. How much of this employment was/is to be low to medium wage work based in the service sector is a question never addressed in the rhetoric.

For example, it was noted that tens of thousands of jobs would be created by the Atlantic Station redevelopment, but there was little specificity provided. As noted by *AJC* reporter Yearly (2005), “When the multi-use development is built out, it’s expected to generate 35,000 new jobs in the 6 millions square feet of Class A office space and 1.5 million square feet of retail, theater and restaurant space...”. Yet, these comments fail to discuss the precise nature of the jobs created. Most conspicuously, there is no discussion about the expected ratio between ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’ workers. Certainly there is more office space than alternatives in Atlantic Station (6 million square feet to 1.5 million). Yet, a job in an office space does not invariably mean adequate and secure employment. In promoting job creation through continuous growth, what became lost was any critical inquiry whether these jobs paid decently and provided healthcare benefits. Here, job creation was a simple monolith that belies the fact that many of the jobs created are low paying service positions, providing few to zero benefits.

In constituting Atlantic Station as a space of employment opportunity, the growth machine strives to manage people by discursively normalizing the need to privilege business interests. While such rhetoric sees equity as a result of efficient commercial activity, materially speaking, a governing agenda driven by business interests often results in uneven efficiency and equity (Elkin 1987; Stone 1989). Nevertheless, the assumption that catering to business interests will lead to a more proficient and just society is frequently promoted (Hackworth 2006; Hubbard and Hall 1998). Ignored in such a production of knowledge is that the privileging of business

interests resulted in the late 1990s growth crisis, and that the retooling of the growth machine along an agenda of 'smart growth' has been at the behest of business interests as well.

DIRECTING PEOPLE TO SPURN THE 'BAD' CITY

Inducing Atlantans into accepting normative understandings about their city also involves the constituting of a decisive and pejorative 'other' (see Alonso 2005). Therefore, when the growth machine directs people to accept the 'good' city, it also actively constructs an image of the 'bad' city that people are encouraged to spurn. The projected 'bad' city, meant to inspire revulsion and contempt, is something to be feared, a threat to be protected from. In contemporary Atlanta, the projected 'bad' city is a dreaded, dystopic space, one that will not produce sufficient revenues, jobs, vitality, and livability. In socio-physical terms, it is a space that has failed to cultivate unique urban locales, does not have a glitzy city center, is marked by gritty and obsolete industrial zones, is 'un-smart' in its growth, and most importantly, does not cater to the demands of business interests.

First and foremost, then, the 'bad' Atlanta is a lusterless location. It lacks important social, cultural, and business capital, and as a result fails to attract creative and ambitious people:

“...I see a city with all the hallmarks of the world's greatest cities - a thriving business community, great cultural and educational institutions, great transportation and great neighborhoods, full of the distinctive environments that make people feel warm and welcomed... A city that beckons people of creativity, ambition and intellect to come and be part of its daily ebb and flow. A city that gives as much light to the world as New York or Paris or London, but with a uniquely Southern twist,” speech by Mayor Shirley Franklin, January 5, 2004

Mayor Franklin's statements do not use words that appear negative. Yet, the communication of badness is unmistakable. The 'bad' city is one that has failed to be competitive via a lax entrepreneurial climate. This city, a purported anachronism, looks away from the necessity for

flexible accumulation and towards a flawed past. It peripheralizes the power and prowess of the market, and in the process prevents people of creativity and ambition from thriving. This space is represented as isolated, removed from global connections, and fails to entrepreneurialize its spatial form to current economic times. The political agenda, drawing upon this space, is to ensure that ‘good’ city projects, such as Atlantic Station, become the norm for regularized redevelopment. Only through the producing of such projects, it is said, can Atlanta stay on course as a progressive, modern city. As Mayor Kasim Reed (2010) noted,

“First, we need to recognize that our City must not only say it is open for business, but it must also act like it is open for business, helping create jobs and economic opportunities for all citizens of our City... As we strive to create a new healthy environment where entrepreneurs can flourish...” Mayor Kasim Reed, January 4, 2010.

This projecting of a ‘bad’ Atlanta works through Atlantic Station as a complex semiotic object to suggest that the city has failed to cultivate itself as a unique destination for capital and the creative class. The site is a gauge of Atlanta’s past (bad) and future (good). The original land-use, a steel mill, is represented negatively as a symbol that signifies Atlanta as a once primitivist, primordial city. The ‘badness’, in no uncertain terms, is a landscape of old industrial mills, tired neighborhoods, and a lifeless downtown, which eviscerates the economic vitality of the city:

“You had a piece of property worth tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars just sitting there. It was foolish that it took so long to get it redeveloped, and that really hurt Atlanta,” (Interview with City Council representative).

Unveiled is the vision of what Atlanta can not go back to, i.e., the city of gritty, industrial form and function that needs to be buried forever. Thus, Mayor Campbell, in pronouncements, speaks of the removal of the steel mill as the most important city development in half a century:

“My contention is that the announcement to redevelop this brownfield, Atlantic Steel, is the most important development announcement for this city in the last 50

years, there has never been a project quite like this... this project represents a culmination of dreams for us in Atlanta and the vision that these developers have,” Bill Campbell, Mayor of Atlanta
(<http://www.investatlanta.com/documents/AtlanticSteelRedevelopmentPlan.pdf>).

The image of the industrial steel mill is deployed strategically to create a sense of revulsion within the Atlanta citizenry, and to prompt them into rejecting this identity for Atlanta, and by extension, identities built around this aesthetic. The Atlantic Steel Mill is described as an industrial brownfield, a relic of an outdated past. The brownfield is a symbol of industrial modes of production that are anathema to the ‘smart growth’ agenda. The presence of this anachronism in the city center was purportedly harmful to Atlanta, and is therefore to be rejected. In this manner, the steel mill becomes a key strategic symbol to mark out the ‘bad’ city. It represents that which Atlanta should not be. It follows that casting the steel mill, as an outdated relic, not only induces people into spurning the ‘bad’ city, it also serves as a political strategy to ensure that the public continues to support the designs of the growth machine. In the final analysis, constructing an image of the ‘bad’ Atlanta is a requisite for the acceptance of Atlantic Station.

Only by disseminating a symbol of the ‘bad’ city can the growth machine constitute their rendition of the proper Atlanta. As *AJC* journalist Salter (1998a) notes, “no one argues that a mixed-use project would not be an improvement over the existing eyesore industrial site.” The steel mill as an eyesore prompts the necessity for the elimination of this space. The off-putting image of Atlanta as home to a useless and contaminated site helps to reinforce the necessity for eliminating the steel mill, and by extension Atlanta’s outdated industrial past. “The Atlantic Steel project should be approved, no question. Right now, it’s an eyesore... Build it,” (Wooten 1998). The production of a spatial imaginary that is seen as worthless induces subjects into unwittingly supporting the development agenda. “Instead of a useless, contaminated site, our

city will soon have a vibrant mix of entertainment, shopping, office space and homes...” (Kahn 2003). In this context, Atlantic Station is represented as a catalyst for retooling the growth machine along the lines of ‘smart growth’ through this presentation of a negative image to be spurned.

Casting space in such a manner is an intentional practice to manage the civic population in the pursuit of economic accumulation. The ‘bad’ steel mill is to be spurned because its presence is a threat to Atlanta’s potential. “The transformation of a major in-town property from an unsightly steel mill into a sparkling cluster of office towers, residences, shops and restaurants...” (AJC 2000). Moreover, the ‘good-bad’ city dialectic, invoked in renditions of Atlantic Station, is apparent in simple positive renditions of the site. For example, the frequent discussions of tree-lined streets in a socially ordered site communicates a sense of a controlled and safe space, but also of the presence chaos and danger (non-ordered “inner city” spaces of crime and social disorder) that needs managing. The emphasis on well-manicured spaces in this way thus produces an ‘othered’ spatial imaginary, in which poor and minority social spaces and filth serve to prompt disgust in subjects. In this context, the public is directed to see Atlantic Station as civilized, progressive, and helping to save Atlanta from a nightmarish landscape. “We feel this is a project... that must be built to replace that environmental nightmare...” Mayor Bill Campbell (in Salter 1998a).

Atlantic Station serves as an analytical model for demonstrating this process. By inducing people into spurning the ‘bad’ city, developers are able to justify the construction of Atlantic Station. As noted in a 1998 *AJC* article:

“A grimy relic of Atlanta’s industrial past, the Atlantic Steel property... is on the verge of being transformed into a lustrous symbol of gracious 21st century urban living... a near-dormant steel plant will be razed, and its long-polluted soil will be removed or treated... The 144-acre Atlantic Steel plant will constitute the largest

cleanup of an industrial site in the Southeast and perhaps in the nation,” (AJC 1998a).

Here, the Atlanta growth machine uses negative rhetoric to mobilize governmentality. It strategically creates an image of the ‘bad’ city through actual material spaces, in this case the ex-steel mill of Atlantic Station, to create a potentially politicized subjectivity. “Everyone knows that property should have been redeveloped years ago... [The steel mill] is absolutely perfect for good in-town housing,” real-estate consultant Dale Henson (in Walker 1997). In this context, the spatial imagining of the steel mill as negative prompts support of Atlantic Station. This allows the agenda to be seen as common sense, and is expressed through claims to the necessity of private developments like Atlantic Station:

“... Everyone involved hopes this experiment in densification, with its emphasis on walking and public transit, can become a model of convenient, comfortable city living and an antidote for the sprawl that afflicts America’s megacities, Atlanta in particular,” (Editorial 1998).

The implication in these comments is that people identify with the convenient and affordable model of city living that Atlantic Station supposedly provides. This identification is constructed through the rejection of a negative image of sprawling suburbia and uncomfortable city living.

Within contemporary Atlanta, it is not just that growth needs to continue, for growth has been occurring in the metropolitan area for several decades. What the contemporary growth machine has sought is a way to redirect this growth:

“In a nutshell, we’re saying you’re going to get a certain amount of growth in the future... It’s either going to go to the outlying areas... and have this effect on emissions, or to places like Atlantic Steel and have this effect,” Geoff Anderson, EPA researcher (Goldberg 1998c).

These statements render growth in Atlanta as inevitable, while also providing a context in which recentralized growth is a responsible approach to development. The necessity of development is clear and unquestioned, because it is being done in a responsible manner that alleviates the

negative byproducts of ‘bad’ growth. “The theory is that such live-work-play complexes create the need for less driving...” former EPA Region 4 chief Stan Meiburg (in Pendered 2002). The representation of Atlantic Station as alleviating negative environmental impacts is accomplished through the rejection of the automotive-driven approach to growth in Atlanta prior to 1998. “Atlantic Station concentrates development instead of spreading it over a large area that invites shoppers to drive from one big box center to the next,” (Pendered 2005a).

Prior to the late 1990s, growth had been quite measurable in Metropolitan Atlanta. However, this growth had resulted in a fairly balkanized geography of limited access suburbs, and an urban core viewed as dangerous (Keating 2001). Representing Atlantic Station as countering this ‘bad’ growth explicitly addresses the suburban sprawl, and implicitly addresses the image of in-town Atlanta as a deviant and unsavory space. However, the overt representations of curbing sprawl are what the growth machine has focused on, so as to retain legitimacy and insure that the imperative for growth remains inviolate:

“Atlantic Station, and its in town location, convenient to the region’s centers of culture, entertainment, law, recreation, and transportation, is strategically placed to capitalize on suburban disenchantment,” (Leary 1998, p.72).

Consequently, within contemporary Atlanta there is a conflation of ‘smart growth’ with an imperative for neoliberal development, which ignores how this is a redeployment of the same political economic thinking that led to a balkanized Atlanta in the first place. Constant redevelopment is put forward as the logical answer to the growth crisis, and is rationalized through negative depictions of past development. The steel mill, the brownfield, and the sprawling shopping center all serve as strategic symbols for the contemporary Atlanta growth machine. They are images of the ‘bad’ city, which the growth machine needs citizens to reject in order to ensure that the current growth agenda is supported.

Directing people into spurning the ‘bad’ Atlanta, one of anachronistic suburban growth, normalizes this conceptualization by whitewashing the issue of social exclusion. This rhetoric directly focuses on how, “...developments like... Atlantic Station are in many ways better than sprawl in creating employment,” (Hairston 2003). Depicting sprawl negatively, as not providing employment opportunity as effectively as ‘smart growth’, emphasizes how ‘smart growth’ is discursively rendered as addressing issues of equity:

“What else was there to do? The mill was just sitting there, barely in use... the city had been losing jobs for years to the suburbs. Redevelopment opened up opportunities for new jobs,” (Interview with JDI executive).

Using employment as a political position has been a key move on the part of growth actors to indirectly manage people, and by extension development. It convinces people of the negativity of suburban style growth, but without considering how the proposed urban alternative is exclusionary:

“Most cities will spend decades to add the sizeable number of jobs Atlantic Station will generate in just a few years. In addition to creating jobs, Atlantic Station will attract people and businesses back to town, helping to reverse decades of outmigration,” Hans Gant, senior VP Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (in Yearly 2005).

Discursively, building Atlantic Station would result in the production of new job opportunities, which in turn would translate into countering the decades of outward growth Atlanta had experienced. However, reversing decades of outmigration also needs to take into consideration the forces that spurred this pattern in the first place. Presenting a spatial imagining of the ‘bad’ city as a place of few options for workers and businesses, and therefore not optimally situated to promote healthy economic growth, once again positions privileging business interests as best practice.

I am not asserting that suburban expansion is preferable to recentralized development. Rather, I point out how the constitution of a ‘bad’ city image is a rhetorical articulation, indicative of governmentality being deployed. Spurning the ‘bad’ city means embracing the ‘good’, which in turn implies the production of subjectivity (see Alonso 2005). This subjectivity is based upon sets of social relations and everyday behaviors, that accept and reinforce the exclusion and primacy of enlightened urban living brought about by ‘smart growth’. It is a rejection of an anachronistic past, and consent to the future put forth by the growth machine through its production of spatial imaginings. “Sad as it is to see good blue-collar jobs disappear, city officials were wise to push forward with the redevelopment plans rather than try to save an obsolete plant,” (Geewax 1998). However, both the future and the past presented in the discourse are highly selective imaginings. Certain elements are emphasized, while others are ignored. Coding the Atlantic steel mill as obsolete and contaminated makes it normal to support its removal, despite the loss of jobs. “You have to look at the other side of it. This will be great for the city of Atlanta,” Jesse Webb, CEO of Atlantic Steel (in Kempner 1998). Atlanta must be made healthy through ‘smart growth’, and yet the supposed ‘disease’ of previous growth is the by-product of the very same business-led approach to growth, an approach that fosters individual identity construction, but in doing so privileges the affluent and excludes the urban poor.

Governmentality thus operates by identifying a threat to the social order, and that rationalizes the management of social behavior accordingly. The ‘bad’ city, and reciprocally its ‘bad’ subjects, is the threat that Atlanta purportedly needs to be protected from. The image of the ‘bad’ city coerces support and deflects criticism from the governing agenda. Rather than questioning neoliberal growth, people instead are asked to embrace the production of glittery new amenities and the removal of ugly and out-dated sites. Rather than examining the exclusive

nature of this growth, subjects are told to embrace an identity of segregated privilege. In doing so they unwittingly do the bidding of the growth machine, while perceiving of themselves as enlightened urban subjects, aiding in the rejection of unhealthy suburban sprawl.

CHAPTER 6 – THE OUTCOME OF RHETORIC, A SEMIOTIC SPACE

ATLANTIC STATION AS A SEMIOTIC SPACE

With governmentality being a socio-spatial process, the material outcome that both activates it and reflects it is a governable space (Huxley 2006; Rose 1999). Meanings and symbols infuse governable spaces to provide them a kind of understanding through which governmentality is acted out. Space becomes semiotic as an element that entraps and absorbs meanings and values in its framework. In the result, space, as a socializing medium, guides human actors to construct realities of the city, complete with a whole host of characters based upon identities of self and others. In disseminating a rhetoric that speaks to what a space means and how it is used, growth machines toil to produce a meaning infused space. This space, an actual physical construct, is built and designed in ways that reflect these rhetorical articulations. In this sense, no space is ever just a physical construct, for the physical and social have a reflexive relationship. Production of a physical space, then, is also the production of a social space. In the Atlanta case, the outcome of the contemporary Atlanta growth machine's articulations is an Atlantic Station that can be read through its built environment and how people in turn use this landscape. Constructed is an understanding of proper urban space and proper subjects, expressed through the architecture, housing, and open spaces of Atlantic Station. In this chapter, I will unveil these three elements of Atlantic Station as a now formed semiotic space, and what they mean and represent to its users.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Atlantic Station is in the same moment a part of, and apart from, the rest of Atlanta. In its rhetorical presentation, the site is often cast as a 'city within a city', in order to appear inviting in its offering of a glitzy new city center. However, this also clearly demarcates Atlantic Station as

in some ways exclusive and not open to the entirety of Atlanta. On the one hand, the site reconnects the east and west of Midtown, thanks to the 17th Street Bridge. On the other hand, the presence of the Downtown Connector on the east side and the massive IKEA store on the west establishes a clear boundary to the site. As Irving (2009) notes, then, the boundaries of Atlantic Station clearly delineate a sense of the site being separated from the rest of Atlanta, and the site's limited access serves a function similar to the gates of an exclusive suburban development.³³

Access to Atlantic Station is not restricted in an overt sense, but it is highly regulated. These boundaries serve to funnel people in an intentional manner, restricting any access that would not be conducive to the management of Atlantic Station. Once inside Atlantic Station, the internal architecture serves a similar purpose. It uses building design and construction material to create a simulacrum of urban space, yet one that is highly manageable. The combination of limited access and simulated urbanity demonstrates that the function of architecture in Atlantic Station is to provide a socio-spatial milieu that is restrictive in both its access and usage. Yet, at the same moment, this architectural façade serves to direct people into viewing Atlantic Station as a safe and desirable urban locale.

An architectural design of limited accessibility – manifest most visibly in physical enclosures ringing the site and multiple inward-looking buildings dotting the venue -- signifies a sense of protection and isolation from the surrounding urban areas, while also working with the internal structure of Atlantic Station to cast the space as a genuine urban experience. This semiotized layout works hand-in-hand with the rhetorical articulations of Atlantic Station, which direct people to embrace the space through constructing a self-identity steeped in exclusive urbanity. In this sense, the design of Atlantic Station directs subjects to see the space as

³³ Ironically, Atlantic Station is home to a massive classical gateway, the largest monument in Atlanta, which symbolically, if not physically, embodies the highly monitored access to the site.

providing them with an insulated environment, which allows them a freedom to be exclusionary and identify themselves as discerning, progressive urban subjects. This is evidenced by the comments of one resident, where he notes that, “the architecture is great because it really makes this place feel like a New York or Chicago,” (Interview with Atlantic Station resident).

The architectural design of Atlantic Station symbolizes a sense of proper urbanity through its recreation of a supposedly historic American authenticity. Some might argue that this imitation is readily observable and Atlantic Station will never be embraced as an authentic urban space, “This place (Atlantic Station) will never be Georgetown, or even Virginia-Highlands, just because it sits on a parking deck,” (Interview with AIG GRE executive). However, I propose a different reading. Lying adjacent to the Downtown Connector, and accessible only from on-ramps to the 17th Street Bridge, the parking structure serves multiples functions, i.e., it provides sole access to Atlantic Station from the east, encapsulates the steel mill contaminants, and serves as the structural base for ‘The District’ and parts of ‘The Commons’.³⁴ Metaphorically, this elicits an understanding that Atlantic Station not only physically rests upon a parking deck, but does so functionally as well. This significance is not lost on the people operating within Atlantic Station, who note that, “the site revolves around that parking deck,” (Interview with Atlantic Station businessman). A design reliant upon such a massive structure signifies that this is a space of controlled and monitored access, and that it is meant to signify a very bounded version of urbanism.

If one were to visit Atlantic Station today, one would see many symbolic outgrowths of attempts to construct a sense of genuine urbanity: from park benches to old time lampposts, central green-spaces to water displays, and lining almost every street and sidewalk, trees and

³⁴ This includes all 5 of Atlantic Station’s sky-rise towers, the center for the site’s commercial and entertainment activity, and parts of some of the residential complexes.

bushes in orderly and well-spaced rows.³⁵ These signified objects offer a sanitized version of genuine urbanism in a careful cultivation and maintenance. They serve as a likeness of the urban experience, but one that is highly controlled. ‘The District’, one centerpiece of the machine’s imaginative offerings, has been allocated meanings that draw on existing urban locales:

“We took the genetic material of successful urban areas, and looked at it from every angle (so that) we could try and figure out how they had become successful. It did not mean directly copying, but it did mean not reinventing the wheel. Places are successful for a reason... the height and scale of the Atlantic Station retail district is modeled exactly on the standards of Faneuil Hall,”
(Interview with former Atlantic Station LLC developer).

‘The District’ has been modeled off of Faneuil Hall in an attempt to copy the prestige, and more importantly the commercial activity, a site such as Faneuil Hall discursively provides (Van Dusen 2005a). Modeling Atlantic Station along these lines was meant to infuse the site with a feeling of being a true urban space (Turner 2001). Drawing upon existing elite urban sites has been an intentional production of space, meant to manage social behavior, and in doing so reflects the duality of Atlantic Station’s rhetorical articulations. Atlantic Station is not only a center for commercial and entertainment activity; it is also an architectural symbol of sanitized urbanism. It affords human actors a social and physical space in which they can perceive of themselves as experiencing urban Atlanta, but in a manner where they will feel sheltered and comfortable.

The use of Faneuil Hall has not been the only borrowed architectural element to signify genuine urbanism in Atlantic Station. The buildings and streets all across the site use aesthetic visuals to try and foster an image of traditional urban space. ‘The District’ sports a pseudo-brick façade given a weathered and aged look, in order to elicit a sense of historical authenticity. Yet,

³⁵ If a person were to visit ‘The District’ today, they would hear the voice Frank Sinatra quietly singing in the air. This is due to hidden speakers under the trees and bushes, which broadcast the music to create a sense of harmony.

for many people, this artificiality is not an issue. “I like the fake brick. It is easy to clean and replace, and so there is always a sense of cleanliness and orderliness that you don’t find in other parts of the city,” (Interview with Atlantic Station resident). This resident embraces Atlantic Station as a simulacrum, giving him a sense of the urban without the unwanted elements (dirt, filth, disorder). Atlantic Station’s design has been intended to provide, “...cleaner air, more stores and more customers...cafes, gardens and a better environment for children, families and the elderly,” (Campell 2004). The clean park benches and faux-brick façade, alongside the neatly trimmed lawns of the park and central-square, are meant to provide subjects with a comforting urban experience, one that is highly managed and sanitized.

HOUSING

Housing in Atlantic Station is signified to be a central definer of the identities of residents on the site. As a central defining element of this creative class, these units are rendered the homes bases of creative people. It is now widely seen as the space that cultivates thoughtful, creative, discerning people that go out in their daily round and deploy their imaginative selves to work hard, play hard, and make a difference in a moving-forward Atlanta. And always, this housing structures access to discerning consumption:

Atlantic Station isn't just home to world-class dining, shopping, and entertainment - it's home to Midtown Atlanta's upwardly mobile creative class. With countless choices for apartments, condos, and homes, it's incredibly easy to make Atlantic Station your home, too. (<http://www.atlanticstation.com/live>)

With over 5,000 units, ranging from lofts, condominiums, town-homes, and detached, the housing stock in Atlantic Station is advertised as providing options for anyone interested in urban living. Through offerings of high-rise luxury condominiums, hip loft-housing above the Faneuil Hall-inspired ‘District’, and mid-rise apartment complexes, Atlantic Station’s housing

signifies that this is a space welcoming of young professionals who have disposable income, and want to live in Atlanta. There are some offerings of townhomes and detached housing, but this does not run counter to the creative class symbolism of the housing. The inclusion of these types of residential options serves a justifying function. This is not a space simply for young singles; it is also open to affluent young families who want to raise children in a dynamic urban environment.

In this way, the housing serves a similar function as the architectural design, it now widely creates a sense of authentic urbanism through which the public will embrace Atlantic Station and embody the characteristics of its creative class population:

“Atlantic Station has everything we need. We know they’re going to go fast, so we decided to move on in. We are thrilled to have a chance to live in a community like this,” Nick Aliffi, resident (in Hulbert 2005).

This resident and his wife purchased a condominium in Atlantic Station because this type of housing would enable them to live within a community they find appealing. They were not duped into this purchase, but rather identified with the values and meanings ascribed to this space and its constituent community. In their identification with Atlantic Station’s housing, they constitute themselves as subjects of the ‘smart growth’ agenda and its creative class inspirations. Their choice of residence signifies to them that they are living in urban Atlanta. Their recognition that the housing in Atlantic Station would fill up quickly signifies that they interpolate this as the new residential destination in Atlanta, and they need to be a part of it. In this way, their individual choice is conditioned through the housing of Atlantic Station. The residential space signifies a socio-spatial relationship, in which the space, and the people who use it, are innovative new urbanites.

The housing of Atlantic Station, which was built intentionally to “prove attractive to affluent young professionals”, directly targets these subjects:

“Developers were thrilled with the hype that came about, because it really helped reinforce the image they were trying to create of the new exciting place for young professionals to come and live,” (Interview with JDI Executive).

According to the rhetoric surrounding Atlantic Station, these young professionals/innovative new urbanites are subjects who embody the sensibilities of the creative class. Atlantic Station’s housing signifies this to people, both through the actual luxuries of the housing units, and the access and status this residential location provides. “And they’ll [Aliffi and wife] be a part of this new community, a little like urban pioneers,” (Hulbert 2005). The residents this space is designed to attract are these urban pioneers, individuals with disposable income and proper civic sensibilities, whose identity and behavior will help to further infuse the space of Atlantic Station with meaning through their use.

While these urban pioneers are discursively presented as ordinary people, the descriptor of ‘typical’ takes on a specific connotation through the housing of Atlantic Station. “A typical young professional single, Moulton loves to entertain her friends, who are more than happy to mingle in the new-urban surroundings,” (Hairston 2006). Moulton might be typical by the standards of middle-to-upper class urban subjectivity, but her purchase of a \$700+ thousand condominium in one of Atlantic Station’s luxury condominium high-rises (partially funded by her parents) indicates a level of affluent privilege that is glossed over, and which is more readily in line with the sentiment that “planners wanted to attract people with at least \$75 thousand in annual income,” (Interview with former Novare group employee). Describing Moulton as a typical young professional normalizes the residents of Atlantic Station under a creative class rubric. These people are identifying in an unexamined manner as urban residential subjects, and

they embrace the advantages this identity brings for them through a space like Atlantic Station. This is accomplished through the semiotics of the housing, which render this identity as typical and proper. Living in Atlantic Station signifies appropriate and sophisticated urban living, while also reinforcing housing exclusion within Atlanta.

In this context, what the housing in Atlantic Station offers is a sterilized urban setting. It gives residents an impression of living within an energetic, progressive community that has all the amenities of a modernist urban existence:

“To me it’s just a beautiful place and I love the location. I love the way they’ve got the whole place landscaped. There will be movie theaters and restaurants and shopping...” David Brown, resident (in Pendered 2004b).

Brown’s statements reflect a meaning infused space, one in which the housing in Atlantic Station reads as a resource to provide social advantages. While an emphasis on community may be present in the rhetoric, the outcome of this rhetoric is a residential space that conditions people to go out and socialize, but not in any collectively inclusive sense. Rather, it is about providing individualized options. “I live in the city for a reason. The thought of being able to walk down my street and be at a movie theater, that to me is just wonderful,” Timothy State, resident (in Turner 2001). Brown and State’s comments, fairly innocuous in their content, are underpinned by a notion that the urban social scene they identify with is one that is highly orderly and reinforcing of social privilege. This is expressed through their housing choice within Atlantic Station. “I just wanted to live in the Midtown area. I just love to be around the restaurants and the culture. I just love the feel, the energy of the city,” Kevin Gaulke, resident (in Johnston 2006). The offerings of housing within Atlantic Station provide ready access to Midtown, which is seen as home to a vibrant and exciting urban milieu, and through the machine’s rhetorical articulation, the new glitzy center of Atlanta. In this way, housing within Atlantic Station

symbolizes energetic urban living. It provides the location and access necessary for one to construct her or himself as an urban subject.

Here, governmentality is being mobilized through the production of these semiotized spaces: identities of users are being crafted, values and meanings about what Atlantic Station means are being created, and values about proper (and improper) city growth are being forged that set the stage for users internalizing these and acting out daily practices and rituals that sanction them. So, in the case of this housing, its visualizing, usage, and engagement prompts people to embody particular identities and visions embraced by the growth machine (that advances their redevelopment interests). As resident Brian Fish (in Hairston 2006) aptly noted, “You’re not just living in your house. It makes you go outside. It makes you be social.” For this resident, Atlantic Station’s housing is about more than just living, it is about immersing oneself in the social milieu of Atlantic Station and being constituted as a value-bearing being. Fish’s comments, then, are indicative of the mobilization of the knowledges that drive governmentality. Through the space of his residence, he has interpolated and embodied the meaning of Atlantic Station. By identifying, and being identified, with the housing of Atlantic Station, residents like the Fish are unwittingly doing the bidding of the growth machine. In this process, there is never flagrant pressure, but rather there is subtle guidance by the understated semiotics engaged, which are implanted in the housing in Atlantic Station.

OPEN SPACES

With Atlantic Station’s in-town location and outdoor design mixing with this collection of significations, its open spaces are now widely seen as truly cosmopolitan terrains, what resident Kevin Gaulke called, “trend-setting venues... it’s kind of like living in New York, ” (in

Johnston 2006). Gaulke is not alone in his comparisons to New York, as more than one resident I engaged in conversation made statements similar to this: “it is great living here. I feel like I am in a real city, like New York.” The comparison to New York is ironic, because Atlantic Station likes to lay claim to its own Central Park. Central Park in Atlantic Station is located in the heart of ‘The District’, and boasts well-manicured lawns, clean benches, and old-fashioned street-lamps, as well as the soothing sounds of Frank Sinatra and other classic musicians being broadcast from hidden speakers. It is home to an annual Christmas tree lighting, and artificial snow is brought in to create a seasonal motif. New ownership has brought in food trucks and street artists to try and turn Central Park into a gathering space for the creative class (Southerland 2011a; Toro 2011). Yet, despite the attempts to label this space as a centralized public gathering site, its function as a vector to funnel people in and out of ‘The District’ prompts their consumptive habits, rather than promoting collective gathering. Unlike Central Park in New York, the park in Atlantic Station is an open space only in the sense that it is unenclosed. The buildings and streets that bound it serve as the main arterials through which people pass through this space, and the park now fundamentally functions as a symbol of openness.

Openness in Atlantic Station is strictly defined. The entire Atlantic Station site is privately owned and operated, and therefore the use of open space requires prior permission for gathering. Activities in the open spaces are contingent upon the acceptance of the private management, which has a strict interpretation of how a proper urban space should be used. As Hankins and Powers (2009) demonstrate, the openness of Atlantic Station is often touted as fostering pedestrian activity, and people who frequent Atlantic Station like to point to its open spaces as enabling them to walk. However, this ‘walkability’ (Hankins and Powers 2009) is very bounded. Walking in ‘The District’ is quite easy, and mandatory, as access requires walking to

and from either the parking garage or one of the shuttle stops. In this way, people engage with an open space as they enter and experience Atlantic Station. Yet, the openness serves as a spatial tool to draw people into the stores and restaurants. The official ‘Rules of Conduct and Respect’ for Atlantic Station explicitly state that loitering and gathering in ‘The District’ is prohibited (<http://www.atlanticstation.com/rules/index>). Certainly management encourages people to use the park as a festival marketplace, but even in this way it is open only as a space of consumption.

Irving’s (2009) work on Atlantic Station reinforces this understanding of open space as a functional tool for directing people’s movements and activities. While the emphasis on openness is important, Irving notes that the openness serves as a design façade, in which people are conditioned into equating urban existence with shopping. The original plan for Atlantic Station was to build an in-town shopping and leisure space that developers felt there was a demand for. “The force behind the proposed redevelopment is demand for an entertainment-retail center,” (Salter 1997a). However, this quickly shifted to incorporate open spaces. The reasoning for this was given as the need to return to a sense of what was considered truly urban. “Now we are getting back to a square in the city,” City Planning Commissioner Michael Dobbins (in Turner 2001). Where originally Atlantic Station was to be centered on an enclosed shopping mall, the outcome of the rhetoric and planning is the image of a large public square, modeled on traditional notions of an open-air mall. The hope was to produce, “...one of, if not the largest, open-air town center projects that has ever been built in the United States,” Denver McGarey, retail broker for Atlantic Station (in Turner 2001). What this signifies is that the open-air design is to provide a sense of urbanity, while also reinforcing that urban spaces revolve around consumptive behavior. ‘The District’ funnels people in and out of its retail and entertainment offerings by providing an open space that is perceived of as an urban green-space.

The presence of centralized green spaces that are navigated by linear pathways and bounded by rules of use constructs Atlantic Station as an open-air shopping mall. The open space serves a vital function in providing a sense of urbanism through its lack of enclosure. Yet, like the shopping mall, the open space in Atlantic Station is a theatre of identity construction, in which human actors internalize a sense of identity through their guided movements and behaviors. This indicates that the openness of Central Park is a spatial tool that is used to condition human actors through its signifiers. These signifiers indicate to people that proper behavior in an urban setting is moving from one destination to another. Public gathering is only acceptable when it is planned for, managed, and serves a larger purpose, such as advertising Atlantic Station through events that draw people into the park. The 'Rules of Conduct and Respect' directly prohibit gatherings of 4 or more juveniles, while encouraging walking and jogging. The benches may be used for sitting, but nothing else. Central Park in Atlantic Station can only be considered a park because it is open and has green space. It signifies a sense of urban green-space, while also reinforcing a notion that urbanism means play-spaces for young urban professionals.

This use of open-space to guide people, both symbolically and physically, is observable in the largest green-space of Atlantic Station, the park in the middle of 'The Commons'. Bounded on the east by a massive triumphal gate of classical design, and on its other three sides by wide boulevards and sidewalks, this park is centered on a pond, with an arching pedestrian bridge, and an ornate fountain. In the abstract, the park is an aesthetically pleasant urban green-space. However, like 'The District', this park's sole function is that of a vector rather than an open gathering space. It funnels people along its walkways, while using its offerings of water art and manicured lawns as aesthetic markers to be visually appreciated, but not physically enjoyed.

“When you walk through Atlantic Station’s park you see people jogging through and going for walks, but no one is ever hanging out on the grass,” (Interview with longtime Atlanta resident who works in Atlantic Station).

As in ‘The District’, the park in ‘The Commons’ is privately operated, and loitering on the grass is highly discouraged. “We don’t want people lying around in the park. It looks bad,” (Interview with Atlantic Station resident). What this resident indicates, is that the park is a meaning infused space, and that lying around in the park is a transgression of the proper use of the space (see Cresswell 1996). For this resident, the open-spaces of Atlantic Station are to be aesthetically pleasing, which means untouched by people (at least those seen as gluttonous or slothful). Therefore, open space in Atlantic Station is a visual signifier. It speaks to what a proper urban space should include, and how people should behave in this space. Walking and jogging are encouraged, because they involve movement in and out of the space, and are an embodiment of proper subjectivity. The jogger in the open-space signifies health and vitality, while the park camper signifies filth and sloth. This reinforces the messages of the architecture and the housing. That Atlantic Station is a space for young urban professionals who seek an environment in which they can sculpt an identity for themselves. This space, and that identity, is not open. They are tightly bound with rules and symbols that speak to the sole function of urban open-space as a vector, only to be occupied for the purposes of moving through the space.

WHAT DOES ATLANTIC STATION MEAN?

Atlantic Station speaks to the meaning of proper urban space as defined by the values and desires of Atlanta’s current growth machine. It signifies, most fundamentally, that the proper and needed urban subject today is one who is, “...well educated and affluent...” and, “...seek[s]

an exciting urban experience,” (Southerland 2011a). This identity of a proper urban subject is embedded in the semiotics of Atlantic Station. The housing speaks to young professionals in its wide-selection of units, and the strategic location near an exciting new urban scene. The architecture signifies that this is an authentically urban space, but one that is safe and sterile. The inclusion of open spaces solidifies this implication, directing people out onto the streets and sidewalks of Atlantic Station. Yet, this connotation is conditioned by, and in turn conditions, what is meant by urbanism and urban experiences. Atlantic Station may mean urban, but it is a bounded urbanism.

Atlantic Station signifies urbanism through its physical and social construction, and yet Atlantic Station denotes exclusive luxury, in which consumptive behaviors are made visible to signify and constitute individual identities of discerning and progressive urban connoisseurs. Atlantic Station thus helps constitute an exclusive identity. This is expressed in the sentiment that Atlantic Station was planned, “...to fit certain types of people...” (Gumbrecht 2008), and is reflected in the semiotics of the site. However, in sporting an eclectic assortment of modernist condominium/apartment complexes, post-modern skyscrapers, a classical monumental arch and high-rise condominiums alongside restaurants and retail outlets, Atlantic Station superficially, “...tries to be all things to all people,” (Kessler 2006). Rhetorically and symbolically, Atlantic Station presents a façade of offering something for everyone. Materially, this space signifies to people that they will never have to interact with those parts of Atlanta that they find distasteful. Additionally, they will have all the benefits such an isolated destination can provide:

“I love living here. My fiancé and I don’t have to have a car. We have a loft that is almost as difficult to break into as Fort Knox, private security to keep things safe, clean and regularly maintained sidewalks, any store you could want to shop in, [all] right next to the Midtown nightlife... What isn’t to love?” (Interview with Atlantic Station resident).

The use of an eclectic design helps to sculpt the site, and the people within it, as diverse. The open spaces give it a feeling of inclusion and welcome. Yet, they invariably reflect a privileged status that reinforces the balkanization of Atlanta. As one longtime Atlanta resident informed me, “Atlantic Station likes to play up the image of the urban frontier. This allows it to be exclusive and uninviting, while being interpreted as an authentic urban space.” The certain types of people Atlantic Station speaks to are the urban pioneers. These ‘pioneers’ are young professionals who perceive themselves as behaving in civically and environmentally responsible ways, which set an example for proper urban living, and address the issues plaguing Atlanta in terms of social, cultural, and economic prosperity.

The most obvious manner through which this meaning is observable is in the constant depiction of Atlantic Station as a locale for the creative class. An example of this can be found in recent remarks made by Marc Toro, the new managing partner of Atlantic Station, “The one thing that people living here have in common is that they are all what Richard Florida would call open to new experiences” (Southerland 2011a). These comments identify Atlantic Station as a meaning infused space; one in which experience provision is paramount. Atlantic Station signifies an urban playground for the creative class. It means that this space will provide amenities to this purported demographic, which will result in them behaving as consumers and leading to continued revenue streams for the growth machine. Atlantic Station might be rhetorically and materially cast as a creative space, but this creativity is tied to profits, and therefore contradicts the proposed openness and inclusivity of the site (see Jakob 2010). Atlantic Station means exclusive luxury leading to growth. However, because it leads to growth, the luxury is seen not as a privilege, but as a reasonable expectation of proper urban subjects. In this way, the architecture, housing, and open spaces of Atlantic Station do more than just signify

identity; they also condition what constitutes an acceptable urban experience. Living, working, and playing in Atlantic Station revolve around, and reproduce, an ideology that views urbanism in terms of creative consumer behavior. This, in turn, supports the governing agenda of transforming the form of Atlanta to cater to business and elite economic interests.

Conflating proper urbanism with luxury and entertainment is one of Atlantic Station's most productive aspects. Users and residents here perceive themselves as living in luxury by choosing a residence in Atlantic Station. They interpret and construct the site as one of entertainment and spectacle through their readings of the architecture and open space. This speaks to an interpretation of urbanism that is based on the construction of adult playgrounds:

“Adult entertainment centers no longer mean a run in with the moral police; instead they are arcades-on-steroids. In other words, they are big buildings with big games for big kids costing big bucks,” (Leary 1998, p.84).

This description of Atlantic Station's potential runs contrary to the outcome of its rhetoric, for it is quite easy to run into the moral police in Atlantic Station (it has strict private security protocols). However, the notation of Atlantic Station as an adult play land on steroids reflects the creative class sensibilities upon which the site is based, and which guide the contemporary Atlanta growth machine. Atlantic Station means entertainment, retail, and other luxury experiences, all within a neatly arranged and aesthetically sterilized atmosphere.

These offerings of distinctive urban experiences by Atlantic Station denote the site as a unique destination. It is a place where people can find something they cannot anywhere else in Atlanta. However, these experiences are operating within a highly regulated form of urbanism, which means Atlantic Station is also highly regulated. While the rhetorical articulations of Atlantic Station exemplify it as a diverse social arena, this diversity is quite bounded through the social fabric. Observable from this, is how, “...the wrong sort of demographic... who stay long

and buy little,” (Green and Wenk 2011), are unwelcome. Diversity is a token gesture in Atlantic Station. This is not a space for the poor and working class, but for hip young urbanites with disposable income. The combination of architecture, open space, and residential offerings renders Atlantic Station as a simulacrum of urbanism. In doing so, these semiotic aspects reinforce individual identification as responsible and proper citizens who do not question their accorded privileging. Inclusion in this space is dependent upon one’s ability to consume and act “civic”, not on one’s perception of progressiveness.

In offering first-rate shopping and entertainment, Atlantic Station serves as a specific type of socializing medium. The space is not just providing people with what they want, it is also signaling to human actors a sense of proper identity and reinforcing the individual construction of identity. The material outcome of a rhetoric conflating community with exclusive urban playgrounds has led to Atlantic Station actually being interpreted by some people as a community (Gogoi 2006). People do actually live, work, and play in Atlantic Station, and in doing so they do perceive of themselves as a social collective. This social collective is one of exclusive privilege, yet this does not detract from the productivity of Atlantic Station being read as a community. What the architecture, housing, and open spaces provide through their sanitized renderings of urbanism, is a space in which social relations and subjectivity become embedded. As a result, people construct, and are guided to construct, identities that support and enable this process. Therefore, Atlantic Station does actually denote urbanism (see Irving 2009). It is a very strict and exclusive definition of urbanism, and yet this enables the site to be mobilized by the growth machine to garner support for its redevelopment agenda.

CHAPTER 7 – DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study seeks to inform us on how governmentality, as a political instrument, is mobilized by urban growth machines. I suggest that in this mobilization, a growth machine advances its redevelopment agenda through the production of proper citizen subjects, social relations, and an everyday *habitus*. Further, I have chronicled that this mobilizing has two central components: the rhetoric of growth machines that speaks to what a space is and means, and the actual production of the material, semiotic-infused space. By examining both the offering of an elaborate, space constructing rhetoric and the end product of this rhetorical usage, I have demonstrated how urban growth machines create the preconditions necessary for the process of governmentality to operate.

The activation of governmentality is here understood as the production of a meaning-infused space, both in practice and representation, by a growth machine. Through its rhetoric and the construction of socio-physical space, growth machines speak to the ways in which the city is used, should be used, and what the city means. Emerging from this, people through their daily behaviors, patterns, and judgments practice a kind of steered and bounded free thought and choice. This freedom is conditioned by the spaces in which people operate, with space made a complex semiotic storehouse through which individual identity, activity, and meaning constitution is conditioned. This bounding enables ordinary-seeming interactions to become embodiments and displays of power. In this sense, the mobilizing of governmentality is a political strategy, which strives to create a socio-spatial milieu in which civic behavior can be indirectly conditioned. Ergo, the activation of governmentality is the attempt to manage civic populations through the production of space.

As urban scholars, it is imperative that we recognize governmentality as an operative process in urban redevelopment. While significant attention has been paid to the ways in which growth machines discursively imagine and represent space, at this time no research has examined how and why growth machines activate governmentality. This is problematic, as activating governmentality is essential to the success of a growth machine. We know that rhetorical articulations of space and society are vital to a growth machine's political agenda (Short 1999; Wilson 1996). Therefore, we can recognize that a growth machine actively seeks to create meaning infused spaces. These spaces serve as socializing mediums through which individuals sculpt identity and belief. In offering these meaning infused spaces, a growth machine strives to normalize a sense of proper civic identity, proper social relations, and a proper everyday *habitus*. This is a political strategy, which endeavors to indirectly mobilize and manage human subjects to embrace the machine's development agenda, ala governmentality. Hence, if we are to acknowledge that growth machine analysis seeks to address for whom space is produced and why, then we must be attentive to how this production is the activation of governmentality.

I have demonstrated this activating of governmentality through my investigation of the current Atlanta growth machine. Like any growth machine, the Atlanta machine strives to normalize a need for continued economic growth through land development. To accomplish this, the growth machine has produced meaning infused spaces, exemplified by Atlantic Station. What Atlantic Station provides is a means through which governmentality can be, and is, activated. In producing this space, the Atlanta growth machine mobilizes governmentality to provide a socio-spatial medium through which human actors can constitute themselves as progressive subjects with discerning tastes, cosmopolitan politics, responsible environmental views, and a desire to be immersed in an urban milieu. However, the setting in which they

operate is one of exclusion, signified through sanitized renderings of urban space. Nevertheless, these spatial imaginings are put forward as an attempt to ensure that the legacy of neoliberal development in Atlanta can continue forwards without meaningful political opposition.

This discourse is supported by, and helps to construct, the semiotic socio-physical space that is Atlantic Station. Atlantic Station, in both rhetoric and materiality, demonstrates the sensibilities of the new urbanism and the creative class that are central to the mobilization of governmentality by the growth machine. Through the symbolism embedded in the site, Atlantic Station promotes sanitized understandings of urban space and interaction. The design and social fabric foster a sense of luxurious, responsible urbanity. Developers of Atlantic Station use architecture, housing, and open-space to signify that the proper urban milieu is defined by affluent consumption within a clean and orderly space. This is accomplished through the site's socio-physical design, which both integrates and segregates Atlantic Station in relation to Atlanta at large. What is only dimly understood is that while this design presents an idyllic, yet mythical, image of space and its appropriate usage and occupation, Atlantic Station is intentionally inaccessible to unprivileged populations within Atlanta.

In its activation of governmentality, the Atlanta growth machine draws upon the sensibilities of the new urbanism and the creative class. Labeling its agenda as 'smart growth', the machine uses these sensibilities in its struggle to cast its agenda as a sustainable answer to the previous incarnations of urban growth in the city. Drawing upon the sensibilities of the new urbanism and the creative class, the growth machine articulates rhetoric and constructs developments that normalize affluent and upper-middle class interests. Thus, while this political project has altered the way development is pursued in Atlanta in terms of location and form, it is nonetheless reinforcing the continued balkanization of Atlanta along socio-economic lines.

What this indicates, is that the Atlanta growth machine is producing space for specific populations. Through discursive formations, the Atlanta growth machine strives to direct the public to embrace an identity for themselves of enlightened urban connoisseurs. However, exclusionary principles lurk within this discourse due to the presence of new urbanist and creative class sensibilities. This is observable in the sanitized renderings of urbanity that the new urbanism and the creative class espouse, and which is readily apparent in Atlantic Station. Nevertheless, the Atlanta growth machine strives to promote Atlantic Station as a socio-spatial ideal. In doing so, the growth machine endeavors to direct the public to embrace select identities, which are imagined as embodying civic responsibility. These rhetorical articulations are a productive means of managing civil society. They do not force acceptance for the growth agenda, rather, they provide a spatial imaginary through which affluent and upper-middle class sensibilities are rendered normative, and in which subjects are only dimly aware of their privileged social status.

The discourse of the creative class and the new urbanism appear egalitarian. However, both measures assume that human behavior can be spatially determined and managed, and therefore optimized for capital accumulation. Therefore, it is unlikely that the application of the new urbanism and/or the creative class by an urban growth machine, in Atlanta or elsewhere, would fruitfully address socio-economic inequity and uneven development. In mobilizing governmentality, influenced by the new urbanism and the creative class, urban growth machines promote an ideological position that sees a socially liberal mentality leading to diversity, and a more cooperative and egalitarian urban social milieu. Yet, this position ignores structural biases and promotes spatial determinism. The new urbanism and the creative class are not socio-spatial panaceas. Rather, they are a means of mobilizing governmentality through a banal rhetoric of

economic viability, which imagines the city as a space ripe for re-conquest. These measures are nothing more than the latest political strategy within the unending process of urban redevelopment and capital accumulation. By uncritically activating a governmentality that masks socio-economic advantage, the Atlanta growth machine is actually reproducing the same histories and geographies of exclusion that led to the late 1990s growth crisis.

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